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RURAL AND HISTORICAL GLEANINGS

FROM

Eastern Europe.

RURAL AND HISTORICAL GLEANINGS

FROM

EASTERN EUROPE.

BY

MISS A. M. BIRKBECK.

"Pro Patria et Libertate."—*Rákóczi.*

Second Edition.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
DARTON AND CO., 58, HOLBORN HILL.

MDCCCLIV.

(*Translation reserved.*)

LONDON:
WILLIAM STEVENS, PRINTER, 37 BELL YARD,
TEMPLE BAR.

Dear Lady Langdale,

It is not mere private regard, but rather admiration of your generous conduct towards the fugitive members of that land from whence these Gleanings were gathered, that induces me to take advantage of your cordial permission to dedicate this volume to you.

With reference to the work itself, I may state, that I am indebted for the materials of which it is composed partly to the kindness of a friend, who, during a long sojourn in Hungary, acquired an accurate knowledge of that land, as well as of its inhabitants; and partly to the living chronicles of their own and their country's misfortunes, the exiles, whom the force of the political earthquake of 1848 cast upon our shores.

In collecting my Gleanings into a sheaf, I have

endeavoured to preserve the characteristic spirit of the original communications, which, as far as I have succeeded, will, I am aware, form their principal attraction.

With much esteem, I remain,
Dear Lady Langdale,
Very faithfully yours,
A. M. BIRKBECK.

10, *Gloucester Place, Hyde Park,*
London, 19th October, 1854.

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RURAL AND HISTORICAL GLEANINGS

FROM

Eastern Europe.

INTRODUCTION.

The Hungarians have an ancient Latin proverb: *Extra Hungariam non est vita; et si est vita, non est ita.** The proud disregard for the rest of the world expressed in this patriotic saying evidently alludes to the riches with which nature has blessed that country. And we need not be Hungarians to be forcibly struck by the surpassing fertility of its soil, and the great variety and abundance of its natural products, affording, though but partially developed, inexhaustible sources of national

* Beyond Hungary there is no existence, and if there is one, it is not such a one.

prosperity. Nature seems to have left the inhabitants nothing to desire. The climate is pleasant and salubrious; the land is watered by rivers and lakes, teeming with fish; its plains are covered with corn and fertile pasturage; choice vines and fruit trees adorn its hills, and along the mountain ranges extend primitive forests abounding in timber and game.

The wealth upon its surface is equalled by that beneath it. In the bowels of the mountains metals and precious stones of almost every description are to be found; the Hungarian gold and silver mines being the richest in Europe, and the fiery opals the most in demand. The features of the country are not less remarkable than its productiveness. There the lover of nature meets with an endless variety of landscape, from the wild and gigantic Alpine scenery in the Carpathian and Mátra mountains—where the boar, chamois, and bear have to this day their inaccessible recesses—to the simple grandeur of the unadorned plains between the Theiss and the Danube.

The country of the Magyars covers an area of 110,000 square miles, and contains fourteen million inhabitants, of whom nearly the half are of Magyar origin. The rest comprise eight distinct races, exhibiting remarkable differences in their

character, language, and pursuits. Among these the most numerous are the Slovacks, Wallacks, Germans, and Croats.

The cause of so great a conflux of races within the boundaries of a single realm may be traced to the geographical position of the country. Situated as it is on the banks of the largest river in Europe —which in its course from west to east formed the natural guide of the migratory hordes, as they poured down from the Asiatic highlands in quest of new homes—Hungary, with her vast plains and pasturages, became the high road, as well as the arena, of the struggles and encampments of those warlike herdsmen who, like so many gigantic water-spouts, swept over the country, destroying other nations in their impetuous course, and after a temporary existence, being in their turn destroyed by succeeding still mightier avalanches, leaving only in some sheltered corner of the land larger or smaller remnants of their race, which in succeeding periods of tranquillity became amalgamated into one political body.

CHAPTER I.

THE PUSZTA.

THE most level and least populous part of the great Hungarian plain—*Rónaság*—is the *Puszta*, or steppes. It lies between the Danube and the Theiss, extending along both banks of the latter river, and over about the moiety of the *Rónaság*, which contains 15,000 square miles. The *Puszta* presents the aspect of a vast ocean, which, during a calm, had by some supernatural agency been transmuted into its present solid state. Its boundless and slightly undulating surface is varied by none of nature's charms, and as yet, even traces of human dominion are few and far between. For miles there is not a village, not a house, not a tree. Here and there a draw-well, with its long pole rising against the sky; a stork immovably poised on one leg; a vulture wheeling noiselessly in the air; now and then a flock moving slowly along, tended by mounted herdsmen; and the Fata Mor-

gana, with its wondrous reflex of airy landscapes, constitute the prominent features in a *Puszta* picture.

Yet in no part of the country have the Magyars clung so pertinaciously to the soil, or so faithfully preserved the customs and manners of their forefathers as on the *Puszta*. Here the wandering tribes again discovered the level ground and fertile pasturages of their lost home in distant Asia, and here Arpad, the first Hungarian prince, with his nobles framed the fundamental constitution, which has so powerfully assisted the Magyars to preserve themselves through so many centuries as a distinct nation. At the present moment every man is a horseman, just as he was a thousand years ago, when the first troops pitched their tents on those boundless plains, and the first Magyar led his horse to drink from the fair waters of the Theiss. We see now, as then, the brown son of the steppes in his sheepskin, or bournous, racing swift as the wind on half-wild steeds, or swimming through rivers, or driving large herds across the plain. To render the illusion complete, the villages with their tent-like houses and wide unpaved streets have the appearance of camps, through which the inmates seem to stride with the mien of conquerors, as if they had but yesterday sheathed

the sword which won for them their beloved country.

But if Nature forgot to adorn the *Puszta*, she has compensated for that neglect by the endowments which she has bestowed on its inhabitants. For she has given to them, as to the whole Magyar race, a warlike and chivalrous spirit, and an indomitable love of freedom, by which they have been enabled successfully to resist Moguls, Turks, and Austrians, who for centuries have invaded their land.

The *Puszta*, therefore, is the centre of the national force of the Magyars, as it is the stronghold of the Protestant religion, being the seat of the Kumanains, Jazygs, Hayduks, and other tribes, most of which are staunch supporters of the Reformed Church, and all warriors at a moment's notice. Their language also is the purest idiom of the Hungarian, and their appearance and character bear the stamp of their direct descent from a nation of aristocrats. They are, in truth, a finely-built race, tall and handsome in form, with dark complexions, expressive features, and frank and unembarrassed manners; their mighty moustaches and long black hair rendering their bearing at once martial and dignified. Though usually grave and laconic, they are capable of excitement, when

they grow extremely animated and eloquent, giving to their soft, flowing language an oriental colouring, from the many metaphors and proverbs which it is their custom to use. Their public life is characterized by honesty and magnanimity; and, amongst their household virtues, courtesy and hospitality are conspicuous, the latter being practised alike by rich and poor, not unfrequently to their own detriment. An enthusiastic love of music, song, and poetry, impart to their social and convivial enjoyments an interest which borders on the romantic.

The costume of the Hungarians consists of a broad-brimmed hat, tight-fitting jacket and trowsers richly braided, boots with the never-failing accompaniment of spurs, and a bournous of thick white cloth, or a *bunda*, a large cloak made of tanned sheepskin, gaudily embroidered at every seam.

The soil of the *Puszta*, excepting a sandy tract here and there, is extremely fertile, and its produce sufficient to maintain ten times the number now scattered over its surface. The saying, therefore, that the inhabitants are stifled by plenty, is literally true; and they merely cultivate just as much of the ground as they absolutely require to supply their own wants and the markets in the

neighbouring towns, leaving the rest for pasturage, the breeding of cattle, as a less laborious and more profitable part of husbandry, constituting the chief part of their occupation and wealth.

As many of the farms are situated at a great distance from the villages, the management of them is intrusted to a set of men, who pursue their calling in almost entire seclusion from the rest of the world. These men are divided, according to their occupations, into two classes; the *Gazdák*, or farmer, who are stationary, and the *Pásztorok*, or herdsmen, whose life is spent in continual roving amidst the solitude of the steppes.

In the centre of a plot of arable land lies the *Tanya*, or farm, where the *Gazda* dwells with his people. The *Tanya* comprises a few huts and outhouses for the cattle and sheep, with a yard, the receptacle of numerous stacks of hay and straw, which from a distance gives to this rude settlement an appearance of greater importance than it really possesses. The whole is inclosed by a mud wall, and guarded by large white shepherds' dogs, with long shaggy hair and bushy tails. These dogs are very savage, and fall upon strangers with the same fury as upon reed wolves, to which, excepting in colour, they bear a great resemblance. Their courage is exceeded only by their vigilance, quali-

ties which render them of immense value to the shepherd.

Beyond the boundaries of these farms extend interminable pasturages, fragrant with aromatic herbs, and covered with countless herds of buffaloes, snow-white bullocks with enormous horns, horses, swine, and sheep, of which hundreds of thousands are yearly exported, particularly to Austria and Italy.

The life of the herdsmen, or *Pásztorok*, who, from their earliest youth, are occupied in tending cattle, is full of wild originality. They are hardy sons of Nature, not as yet reached by the blessings of civilization, and free alike from its vices. Untaught, and simple in their wants, and, by the nature of their occupations, separated from the world, they form a strange community of many thousand members, connected only by the slight bonds of accidental meeting, rejoicing in unbounded liberty, and knowing no other law than that of their own will. They remain the whole year beneath the canopy of heaven. Their chief clothing is a *bunda*, which serves them for house, bed, and all, and which they wear in summer with the woolly side outwards and in winter inwards. With the exception of an occasional traveller, they come in contact only with the few men with whom they transact

business. Notwithstanding this, they are polite in their bearing to the stranger, and welcome heartily every one as their guest who will sit around their fire and partake of their abundant meal.

Although by baptism members of the Christian community, their religion chiefly consists in ideas awakened by the contemplation of nature. They usually remain single, and if they marry, their wives dwell in a neighbouring village, visiting their husbands from time to time, to carry them the few necessaries their primitive wants demand.

The melancholy and stillness which surround them during their solitary existence on the *Puszta* are so deeply impressed on their whole being, that even at their meetings they remain grave and taciturn, and only become animated when music, song, and wine have aroused their slumbering feelings.

Their fare is as simple as their manner of life, consisting of bread and bacon, or *Gulyás-hús*, a dish made of finely minced pork, mutton, and beef, highly seasoned with pepper, and cooked in a pan. Their beverage is a light wine, produced on the *Puszta*. Smoking is an indispensable necessity with them, and the pipe is seldom from their lips.

The habits and inclinations of the *Pásztorok* are greatly influenced by their occupations. The most independent among them is the *Csikós*, or "horse-

keeper." Brought up with horses and on horseback, he becomes the best rider in the world. On foot he seems uncomfortable, and is only truly happy when mounted on some wild steed. Then he feels as free as air, recognizing neither impediment nor danger. From the *Csikósok* the best regiments of hussars are recruited, celebrated for their valour and agility as light cavalry.

The *Csikós*, with the assistance of helpers, takes charge of the more or less numerous studs belonging to noblemen or to communities. Although the breed of horses in Hungary has been greatly improved by the introduction of the English and Arab race, yet those of the *Puszta* excel more in endurance and speed than in blood.

When the proprietor of a stud intends to select a full-grown colt for his use, the *Csikós* vaults on to the first horse that comes to hand, and gallops into the midst of the herd, which he skilfully guides with his long whip. He then casts the lasso, a rope with a noose, so adroitly, that, at the first throw, he catches the marked colt. It is then saddled and mounted by one of his helpers. The unruly animal bounds and tears across the plain at the wildest speed, making every effort to throw its rider, yet in vain. The *Csikós* cares neither for its kicking nor prancing, but sits in his saddle as quietly as if it were

an arm chair. At length, tired out, and trembling all over, the colt, already half broken in, offers no further resistance, and the *Csikós* leads it away to its owner. The horses in training for carriages are harnessed to heavy blocks of wood, and driven till they are accustomed to their work. The *Gulyás*, or keeper of bullocks, like the *Csikós*, tends his herds on horseback. The bulls, particularly when they stray from the herds during certain seasons, are very ferocious and dangerous, often pursuing both riders and carriages for miles, tearing up the earth with their enormous horns, and bellowing in a fearful manner.

The wildest class in the large body of herdsmen are the *Kanászok*, or keepers of swine. Their occupations and sports are so often connected with fighting and bloodshed, and they signalize themselves by such a daring courage, that they may very properly be called the "warriors" of the *Puszta*. The fame of a celebrated fighter is their greatest pride.

Their inseparable companion is a sharp heavy axe, resembling the tomahawk of the American Indians, which they throw with such extraordinary skill that they can kill a pig with it at the distance of twenty yards.

In summer they tend their herds on the extensive morasses which cover large tracts of low

ground, where the pigs find sufficient food from the roots of reeds and sedges. For the winter, they betake themselves with their herds to the mountains, on the borders of Transylvania.

As soon as the *Kánászok* have found a suitable place in the forest for the fattening of their pigs, they build a temporary hut with the branches of trees, as a shelter for themselves and their helpers against the inclemency of the weather. Their leisure hours, of which they have many, they wile away with throwing the axe at a given mark, or with music and dancing.

Their dance, which is very expressive, is generally performed by only one person. It consists of elaborate movements of the feet to the sound of a violin or bagpipe, accompanied by the song of the dancer.

This terpsichorean performance, the plastic representation of enticing and slaying a pig, begins with playing with the axe. The dancer takes one of these heavy weapons in each hand, and, whilst springing, whirls them round his head with such rapidity, that they look like a pair of wheels; now and then throwing them into the air to the measure of the music. The dance ends either by aiming the axe at a given mark, or at a pig, selected from the herd for that purpose.

Besides this, they have another "pastime"—at least they call it such—so wild and barbarous that it is not unfrequently attended with fatal results. From time immemorial it has been a custom with the *Kanászok*, originating, perhaps, in one of the national wars, to make predatory expeditions to carry off their neighbours' pigs. In the prosecution of this barbarous custom there is a certain kind of chivalry, showing that they practise it less for the sake of plunder, than to prove their courage. When a *Kanász* undertakes one of these marauding expeditions, he assembles his men, six or eight in number, and sets out during the night to the place where the marked herd is feeding. On reaching the hut of the *Kanász* who guards it, the leader of the band strikes the door three times with his axe; this being the well-known sign that he is to come forth and defend his herd. The threatened *Kanász* does not require the challenge to be repeated, but at once rushes out with his people, and falls, armed with axes, upon the assailants. A violent encounter ensues, usually terminating, after a number have been wounded, with the victory of the aggressors, who have now the privilege of selecting a number of the best animals and driving them away, without further opposition, to their camp.

As, however, these plundering expeditions are made successively by all the *Kanászok*, the diminution of their swine is pretty well equalised; but not so with regard to the men themselves, who sometimes fall victims to their ill-timed bravery, and whose loss does not admit of such easy adjustment. When an expedition terminates in the death of one of the marauders, the news, though slowly, at length reaches their homes, and those who are supposed to have been the most culpable in the affray are taken by the County Pandurs, or rural police, sent after them. We say "supposed," because neither punishment nor reward can ever induce these herdsmen, untutored as they are, to denounce their guilty companions. Such an act would be considered one of the greatest treachery, and would lead to the expulsion, if not something worse, of the denouncer from their community; for, spite of their nightly wars, these men live together on the best terms, after their fights, mutually binding up their wounds, and attending upon each other like brothers, until the next encounter, when they again inflict and receive fresh injuries.

Besides the *Pásztorok*, the *Puszta* is peopled by another set of men still more attached to a life of roving, not tolerating even the light constraint of tending flocks, and trusting entirely to accidents'

capricious favour for their daily bread. These men are called "*Szegény Legények*," literally, "poor fellows."

The motive of their lawless existence is the enjoyment of idleness and love of unbounded liberty, for they generally take from the overplus of the rich only as much as will satisfy their simple wants. Cattle, which they carry off with astonishing dexterity, is their chief spoil. Travellers they molest only in order to get tobacco from them for their pipes. They live more singly than in company. From time to time their numbers are recruited by herdsmen compelled to join them from urgent motives, such as the fear of being enlisted as soldiers, or to evade justice after a sanguinary fray amongst themselves, and who, when tired of their lawless life, again enter their former service, their masters never asking them how they have been employed during their absence. Thus it is, that the "*Szegény Legény*" so easily fraternise with the *Pásztorok*. If any of the former are pursued by County Pandurs, the latter help them to escape, partly from fear, and partly from sympathy; so that, if they have committed no greater crime than stealing cattle, they are seldom overtaken by the law. Even at the *Tanya* they find temporary shelter, that is to say, some food and a night's quarter, and woe betide

the manager who denies hospitality to a *Szegény Legény*. He may assuredly expect to see his farm in flames when he least expects it.

The only place of amusement for these nomades of the *Puszta* is the *Csárda*, or hedge-inn, a very uninviting oasis of pleasure, where every one but the simple child of the steppes, who carries his contentment with him, would feel but ill at ease. A *Csárda* might well be called a primitive attempt at hostelry. It is a hut thatched with straw or reeds, containing two rooms divided by a kitchen. The furniture is simple in the extreme; a large oven, long table, and benches of massive wood ranged along the bare walls, forming the contents of the principal chamber, or drinking room.

The host of the *Csárda*, perhaps formerly himself a *Szegény Legény*, is the friend of all who will enter his dwelling and drink his cheap wine. He cares not a whit whether the face of his guest is clouded by the fear of persecution or brightened by a heart at ease; he asks neither his name, nor his occupation, nor the reason of his journey; and when occasionally, in the dead of night, a horseman arrives in anxious haste at the *Csárda* with his hat drawn over his gloomy countenance, the host, after exchanging a look of intelligence with him, silently places a jug before his taciturn guest, and betakes him-

self oftener than usual to the open door, to listen if any sound disturb the stillness of the night. Such guests depart before daybreak and ride on to the steppes, where all traces of them soon disappear.

The *Csárda* is frequently the scene of noisy merry-makings, at which picturesque groups of herdsmen, travellers, gipsies, *Szegény Legények* and County Pandurs may be seen; the latter scouring the country in quest of thieves, keeping a sharp scrutinising eye on the guests.

As the Hungarian is a passionate lover of music and dancing, every hedge-inn has its band of gipsy musicians, who, although constantly wandering, yet always manage to appear whenever their services are required. To complete the party, swarthy maidens, with flashing eyes and long dark hair, flock there to share the dance with the guests. The gipsies, with their violin, cymbal, and clarionet, take their places round the large oven, and commence playing without any invitation. By degrees the melodious sounds find their way to the hearts of the men, sitting over their wine with an air of austere composure, till at length one or more of them suddenly start off their seats as if seized upon by an unseen power, and begin the fiery *Csárdás*, the national dance of the Hungarians. A look from them is sufficient to bring their favourite

maidens to their side, and they soon spring and twirl in a labyrinth of joy to the sweet undulating tones. Their countenances beam with an expression of lively pleasure, and they give vent to their feelings from time to time by shouts or a shrill whistle. Their ardour increases with the increasing excitement of the dance. The mighty spirit of music carries them on like a leaf in a storm on its elastic wings, and as often as the musicians seem about to pause, the dancers call out their national challenge, "*Három a táncz!*" or "Three times around!"

Men, thus possessed with musical delirium, present truly a strange sight, and you might well doubt whether they are the same who, only a short time before, were seated at the tables so grave and so silent.

At intervals the dance alternates with songs, which are traditions of old and happier times, or love tales.

This harmless amusement often takes a serious turn, by the entrance of a celebrated fighter, who, without a greeting, proceeds to the middle of the room, takes his axe from under his cloak, and strikes it into the cross-beam of the ceiling, asking, in a voice of challenge, "Who is a man in the

Csárda?" Hereupon either one of the herdsmen steps forward, and draws the axe from the beam—this being a sign that he accepts the challenge—or all present leave the room. The fighter, being thus left alone, drinks for some hours, to solace himself, and afterwards boasts to his comrades of his easy victory.

When, however, an adversary presents himself, a fight is agreed upon, the guests immediately form two parties, and make a ring round the combatants, who commence a frightful battle with their axes. The bystanders, frequently overcome by their martial predilection, join in the contest, and the parties fall upon each other, whereby the mallet of the *Csikós*, the club of the *Gulyás*, and the axe of the *Kanász* severally distribute blows and wounds.

The axe usually wins the victory, the results of which are not alone broken heads, but sometimes the death of one of the herdsmen. The most guilty quickly makes his escape, and instead of returning to his herd, becomes a *Szegény Legény*.

The herdsmen have an invincible antipathy to all contact with judicial people, knowing from hearsay the solemn formalities and costly process of law, as well as its venality, and they prefer, whenever it

is possible, to settle their differences in what they term an "amicable way." The *Csárda* is their court of justice on these occasions.

Their quarrels arise, in general, about missing cattle, or a favourite maiden. In the former case, the injured party, already convinced of the guilt of one of his camarades, invites him to drink at the next *Csárda*. After emptying several bottles, and thus duly fortifying themselves for the trial, the plaintiff begins with a gravity and composure that would do honour to a judge.

"*Pista Bátyám*"—brother Stephen,—"have you seen my grey foal?"

"Not that I know of, *Pali öcsém*"—brother Paul—replies the questioned, with equal composure.

"Now, tell me truly; you must have seen it, for I myself recognised it amongst your herd."

"Perhaps thou took'st my large grey dog for thy foal?" "I see, you are determined to know nothing of it. Well!" says the imperturbable plaintiff, pausing in his short examination. He then draws his club from under his sheepskin, and continues his cross-questioning with a blow, that descends with the rapidity of lightning on the head of the offender.

"So, *Pali öcsém*, thou hast struck me!" remarks the other in a phlegmatic manner. "Well, wait a

little."* It is now his turn. He accordingly takes his club, and answers with a blow. Thus they go on fighting, until the thief all at once remembers the missing foal, and promises to restore it. They then lay their clubs aside, endeavour to drown the remembrance of their "amicable" law suit in fresh potations, and leave the *Csárda* as they came, on the best terms possible.

* The custom of the younger addressing the older with "you," while the latter uses the familiar "thou," is perhaps an exclusive peculiarity of the Magyars. This patriarchal reverence for age is so deeply rooted in the nature of the people that they do not violate it even under the greatest excitement. The same respect is shown by the wife to her husband

CHAPTER II.

A THEISS FERRY.

EXCEPTING a few bridges, the communication over the Theiss, in its course through the Hungarian plains, is carried on by ferry-boats, large enough to contain from two to four carriages, which are either ferried to and fro by means of strong ropes stretched across the river and fastened to stakes on each shore, or more frequently by the aid of oars.

The ferrymen live in huts near to the landing places, and occupy themselves during their leisure hours—of which they have many—with fishing and making baskets, hurdles, and hampers from the twigs of the willows which skirt the banks of the river.

The neighbourhood of a ferry is generally pointed out by a few tall silver poplars, which, besides sheltering one or more huts, serve as a way-mark to the traveller. Not far from the ferry stands a *Csárda*, or hedge-inn, devoid both inside

and out of every attraction and comfort, save a cheap kind of wine, and excellent bread. The want of good inns, however, is scarcely felt in that part of the country; as it is the custom of the people to provide themselves abundantly before setting out on a journey, and so to arrange their stations as to be able to rest at a friend's, or at some hospitable landowner's house.

A Theiss ferry, though usually but little frequented, presents a very animated scene at the periods of the fair at Debreczen, the most important commercial town in Eastern Hungary; when, along the countless wheelmarks across the steppes, long lines of vehicles and droves of cattle may be seen converging from north, west, and south, to the different landing places. It is both interesting and amusing to watch this motley concourse of people, who, in language, in apparel, in manners and customs, in their general appearance and in their occupations, form such striking contrasts to each other. The high, long waggons, not unlike moving houses, to which twelve or fourteen small horses are harnessed, belong to the Slovacks from the northern mountain counties, who are carrying their produce to market, consisting of wooden, earthen, and glass manufactures, linen, medicinal herbs, iron wares, &c. The owners of these goods are known by

their fair complexions, pale, beardless faces, subdued manners, and soft language. They wear plain dark clothes, with broad double leathern girdles round their waists, in which they keep their money. The smaller carts, drawn by strong German horses, and laden with heavy chests and bales, belong to the merchants of Pesth and Vienna, who send Austrian manufactures and groceries to Debreczen in exchange for Hungarian ducats or raw products. These carts are accompanied by clerks, easily recognised by their French attire and German dialect. Here and there the long line of heavy waggons is interspersed by a light Hungarian cart, or the elegant carriage of a nobleman, drawn by four fleet steeds, often harnessed in a row, and driven by a fierce-looking brown son of the steppes, dressed in a richly embroidered white bournous, or in tight-fitting and handsomely braided apparel. The carts laden with hides and skins, or with articles of finery of a cheap and gaudy description, belong to the Jews. Their shabby velveteen garments, their sharp accent and marked features, admit of no doubt as to their race. Following these come herdsmen on horseback, their noble, martial countenances shaded with broad-brimmed hats. They pass by at full speed, or slowly drive herds of cattle and horses with their long whips. Troops of

County Pandurs, or rural police, too, make their appearance on horseback, in handsome hussar attire, armed with swords, muskets, and pistols. They are scouring the *Puszta* in quest of *Szegény Legények*, or "poor fellows," of whom there is almost every year one or more who, by their daring feats in cattle-stealing, attract the particular attention of justice. At that time the most celebrated *Szegény Legény* along the Theiss was Rózsa Sándor, who for years had been arraigned for murder, but always contrived to escape the vigilance of the Pandurs.

These caravans, coming from such different points, meet at the Theiss ferries, in order to cross the river, where, in the event of stormy weather, their patience is often put to a severe trial.

In the autumn of 1847, at the period of the great fair at Debreczen, I witnessed an unusually large conflux of merchants, carts, and cattle at the ferry of Csurgó. On my arrival a heavy gale from the north had sprung up, which rendered crossing so dangerous that the ferrymen were obliged to suspend their occupation. Every moment the crowd was increased by fresh arrivals. It may readily be imagined that the chief ferryman was a person of no little importance on this occasion. His hut was besieged by every new comer to hear the fate of the day from his lips. At this date the

head of the ferrymen at Csurgó was a man of the name of Istók. In spite of his sixty years he still vigorously discharged his hard duties, and with his athletic figure, long wavy hair, and mighty moustache, looked more like a chieftain than a common boatman. From long practice he knew right well how to treat his customers, and drank with great dignity to the health of those who offered him their *Kulacs*, or wooden flasks, or filled his pipe with tobacco from the leather bags, which, as a matter of courtesy, were presented to him.

As the last sunbeams had disappeared from the steppes, and the wind had but little abated, all gave up the idea of proceeding further that night, and made themselves as comfortable as circumstances and their means permitted. Here and there tents were pitched, and fires of reeds or dried manure were lighted up, around which groups gathered to prepare or to consume their evening meal. The horses were chained by the feet in pairs, and driven on to the pasturage, from whence the sound of their bells was heard amidst the din and bustle of the camp.

As I made one of the number of the weather-bound, I determined to amuse myself as well as the untoward events of the day allowed, and after sauntering amongst the carts and watching the

multifarious proceedings of their owners, I took my way to Istók's. Around a large wood fire, blazing in front of his hut, a number of his friends were seated or stretched upon furs and cloaks. Istók himself, with a white bournous thrown over one shoulder, sat on the edge of a boat, keel upwards, smoking a short pipe, and whilst he gave abrupt answers to one and another, was intently watching the wind and the turbulent river.

I had known the old ferryman for years. He was formerly an hussar, and after retiring from service was from his experience and intelligence looked upon by the country people as a very learned man. He was renowned for his skill in telling stories. The more marvellous, the more they were admired; for the Hungarians, like other people in a simple and natural state, give the preference to accounts in which some superhuman being plays the chief part. No one was so well versed in the sayings and traditions of the *Puszta* as Istók, and none could draw so lively a picture of a battle. His memory was truly astonishing: and with his vivid imagination he perfectly understood how to carry his auditors along with him. He therefore enjoyed unrivalled celebrity as the first story-teller in the neighbourhood; and that is saying much, when we recollect, that, next to music and singing,

the Hungarian passionately loves and frequently exercises this amusement; thus, good narrators are to be found everywhere.

When in his best humour, Istók would tell of his strange adventures as an hussar. He would declare with great earnestness, that once during his long marches he came to the end of the world, from whence he looked down upon nothingness, and as he could proceed no farther, he turned back again. Another time, he had to cross such high mountains, that he was obliged to dismount from his horse to prevent the plumes in his csako from brushing the sky, and on that occasion collected as many stars as his fodder-bag could hold; the light of which for a long time saved him the expense of candles. With such tales he would astonish his admiring listeners.

On my joining the group before his hut, the subject of discussion was naturally the weather. One of the guests said to the ferryman: "See there, Istók *Bátyám*—brother Stephen—what a mist is rising over the Sós-morass."

"I have already remarked it," he replied; "it is the veil of the Maiden of the Theiss."

Several of the traders, who it might easily be seen, had not grown up on the *Puszta*, eagerly inquired the meaning of that expression.

"Yes," said the ferryman, musingly, whilst twirling his moustache; "the mist from *Sós*-morass is the veil of our Maiden: whenever it rises and moves along the river it is a sign of wet weather."

Some of the group then spoke anxiously of the bad effects of the rain on the roads and fair; others, whose curiosity had been excited by the ferryman's remark, begged for an explanation of the connection of the Maiden's veil with the weather, supporting their petition by a never-failing bribe, in the shape of their *Kulacs* filled with the fiery wine of their country. After Istók had taken a fair share from each, and wiped his moustache after every draught, he began:

"It is so long since the Maiden's veil first appeared on the Theiss, that without an almanac I really cannot satisfy your curiosity as to the date of it; suffice it to say, that it was before our people settled on the *Puszta*. Well, once upon a time a mighty prince who dwelt on the other side of the river, ruled over the land. This prince had a son, whose greatest pleasure was to spend his time in riding and hunting upon the steppes. One winter, when the river was entirely frozen over, he rode for the first time in his life across the ice, to see how the world looked on this side. He wan-

dered about the livelong day, till at length he lost his way, and night overtook him in the middle of the *Puszta*. To his great joy, he all at once perceived a light in the distance, which guided him to a hut, wherein a large fire was blazing. He rode up to it, and entered. The interior of the hut looked barren, for it belonged to a poor fisherman, like myself; but it contained a treasure in the form of a very pretty girl, in which, truth to say, this country has never been wanting. The beauty of Juliska, for such was the girl's name, so entirely captivated the young man, that he forgot fire and hut, and loved her almost before he had time to greet her parents. Under various pretexts he tarried several days at the fisherman's; and when he rode back to his castle he left his heart behind, taking, however, in exchange the girl's love with him. Soon after his return home, it happened that he was obliged to go to the war, whence he only came back late in the spring. His first care was to hasten to his beloved Juliska; but the ice, which had formerly served him as a means of communication across the river, had disappeared, and before him lay a vast expanse of water. It was probably at the time of the early floods. There were then no ferries along the Theiss, as there are now-a-days; and even if there had, at flood time they would

have been of no avail. The young prince was in despair at the sight of this insurmountable impediment. Most likely he would have had to await the ebbing of the waters—a very tedious affair for an impatient lover—had not the genius of love come to his assistance. 'I will build you a bridge,' said the friendly spirit to the young prince, 'over which you shall safely pass from one shore to the other, until the time comes when you first bring sorrow to your beloved one's heart and tears to her eyes.' The prince's son joyously agreed to the terms; and the genius, lighting his torch, traced an arch with it through the blue vault of heaven, and there, wherever his torch had touched the sky, a golden bridge arose, reflecting all the brilliant colours of the rainbow. This marvellous structure extended from shore to shore. The young man crossed it without feeling giddy, and soon reached his lovely fisher girl. Their happiness lasted till the autumn, when he was summoned to his castle to wed a neighbouring prince's daughter. On his bidding the last farewell, Juliska shed the first tears of sorrow. She wept silently, and did not even express the secret wish of her heart, that he would return once more to her poor hut; she only entreated him to remain with her till the storm, which was gathering in the firmament, was over. But he

heeded not her supplications, and forgetful of the kind spirit's warning, hurried on to meet his doom. As he gained the highest point of the bridge, a flash of lightning struck the delicate fabric and shivered it to atoms. The young prince fell into the deep water, from which he never rose. The girl, witness of her lover's untimely fate, was seized with despair; she could no longer endure her lonely and joyless existence, and plunged into the Theiss, that in death at least she might be united to him. Since then she often rises from the stream, veiled in a thin mist which she draws with her as she wanders along the banks, perhaps to visit the scene of her short-lived happiness. Whenever she appears, Nature herself seems affected by her grief; as she not only puts on a sombre garb, but weeps for days in unceasing rain. The people gave to poor Juliska the name of 'The Maiden of the Theiss.'"

The ferryman paused, and his auditors, who had forgotten the weather and its effects whilst listening to this touching tale, now felt quite disposed to hear some other tradition of the *Puszta*, and tempted him to proceed by fresh offers of wine and tobacco.

"You know such a pretty legend of the origin of the *Délibáb*—Fata Morgana—observed one of his

friends. "Sure enough I do, and many others besides," he replied; "but my pipe is out, and till it is refilled, I cannot begin another tale."

Several offered their assistance. Istók gave his pipe to one of his younger companions, who carefully filled, lighted, and handed it over to its owner. After leisurely inhaling the smoke of the aromatic herb, and emitting several mighty whiffs he continued: "You must know, that the Fata Morgana, according to my grandfather's account, who heard it from a learned monk, was first seen on our Puszta, owing to a very peculiar and wonderful circumstance.

"At the time when the Moguls, like locusts, overran our fatherland, a noble widow, with her three daughters, lived farther down the stream in Delivár. The news of the advance of the monsters, who, as the story goes, were one-eyed and ate the flesh of men, had scarcely reached the land, when they, fleet as the wind, made their appearance in every direction, burning and murdering all that came in their way. The inhabitants of the towns and villages deserted their dwellings and fled, part to strong fortresses, and part in search of hiding-places: of the latter, however, few escaped, as they were soon overtaken and slain by the merciless enemy. The widow of Delivár, too,

left her castle with her daughters; but before they could discover a safe retreat among the reeds, their strength failed in the middle of the level plains. Delay was certain death; this the mother felt most deeply, and as she was the weakest of the party, entreated her children to save themselves without considering her. They, however, only clung the more tenderly to her, and were determined to share her fate. Meanwhile they perceived on all sides the smoke of burning villages, and saw in the horizon a cloud of dust rise, as it does before a storm, which approached with fearful rapidity. The ground began to tremble as the dark figures of countless riders, galloping onwards, became more and more distinct through the dust in which they were partly enveloped.

"During these moments of intense agony, the mother with burning tears prayed to God to take her life as a sacrifice for the safety of her beloved children.

"As destruction seemed inevitable, the women encircled each other in a long embrace, and awaited the death-blow with silent resignation. All at once the trembling of the earth ceased; the terrified group could only hear the violent throbs of their own hearts, and they scarcely dared to trust their eyes, when on looking up they saw a broad

clear stream flowing between them and their enemies, the banks of which were covered with pleasant groves. After a short halt, the Moguls turned round and disappeared as quickly as they came, behind a cloud of dust. The mother and her daughters were saved. The monk explained to my grandfather, that God had heard the mother's prayer, and changed her tears into a protecting stream, and thus stopped the advance of the enemy, against whom even the armies of King Béla were too weak.

"In memory of this wonderful event, that peculiar apparition, with its flowing lakes and landscapes, is called the *Délibáb*, and may be seen to this day on the *Puszta*." Towards the end of Istók's tale, I descried the gipsies from the neighbouring village of Boldog-Emlék, with their instruments, coming in the direction of the Csárda, from whence the sound of music soon proceeded. As I was already acquainted with most of Istók's stories I stole from the circle of listeners and bent my steps towards this humble abode of pleasure.

CHAPTER III.

ROZSA SANDOR.

THE *Csárda*, which since the appearance of the musicians had become additionally attractive to sight-seekers as well as to lovers of the dance, was situated about half-a-mile distant from the landing place. This building, like many others of the same kind in the *Puszta*, was whitewashed, thatched with reeds, and consisted of two rooms, separated by a kitchen. Before the door of the spacious drinking room, a verandah covered with branches of willow was erected to shelter the guests from rain or sun. To the posts of this verandah several saddled horses were tied. A crowd of traders, chiefly Slovacks, thronged against the open door, in order to enjoy the unusual spectacle of merry-making among herdsmen. I had some trouble in finding my way into the house, which was dimly lighted up by a few tallow candles, rendered still more obscure by the cloud of smoke issuing from the pipes

of the numerous guests. Just within the door I met a group of pretty peasant girls, awaiting a summons to join the dance, and chatting with happy faces and sparkling eyes. With the exception of some traders, the *Csárda* was filled with herdsmen, who sat at long tables placed against the walls, drinking their wine from bottles or jugs, smoking short pipes, and silently listening to the music. Each of them bore in his stoic and proud appearance the stamp of an indomitable will. Their looks were full of courage and self-confidence; their swarthy features expressive of nobleness and energy, and their forms full of strength and beauty. They mostly wore broad-brimmed hats, and over their long-sleeved shirts, richly embroidered white bornouses, hanging lightly from one shoulder. Around the great round oven sat the gipsies, with violin, clarionet, and cymbal, in their worn, torn, and grotesque attire, looking the very picture of dilapidation, and playing with inspired mien the air of a favourite *Csárdás*. In the midst of the large room several couples were dancing. As the music went on the numbers of dancers increased, the animating melodies seizing irresistibly upon the feelings of the guests. Every now and then one jumped up from his seat, and beckoning to a maiden from the group wishfully waiting in the

door-way, joined the rest of the dancers; until at length a very small space remained for the last comers. In a narrow circle each pair enjoyed the pleasure of the moment, and yielded with all their hearts to the charm of the tones; now and then giving vent to their joy in loud exclamations. At the end of the dance, each man lifted his partner in the air, and the couples then separated; the men returning to their seats, and the girls mingling with their less fortunate companions.

When the middle of the room was tolerably clear, a man stepped forward, and throwing his hat and bornous on the ground, challenged the gipsies with the call:—"Now, fellows, strike up my note!"

The man was young, of middle stature, and muscular frame; his black hair was cut short; his grave, pale face, with small moustache, had a striking expression of sadness; yet his eyes were like burning coals, and glanced restlessly from one object to another. He wore dark-blue jacket and trousers, covered with braid, and swung in his right-hand a heavy axe like the tomahawk of the American Indian; a sign that he belonged to the class of *Kanászok*, or swinekeepers.

Whether the gipsies knew him and his note, or whether they merely guessed his taste from his exterior, they immediately struck up an air, whose

sweet melancholy tones, it was plain, met with his full approbation. The *Kanász* beckoned no maiden to his side, but alone went through the mazes of the dance, which he performed with such consummate skill that all eyes turned admiringly upon him. It was the *Kanász* dance. The artistic movements of his feet were seconded by the dexterity with which he whirled the axe round his head, and threw it into the air to the measure of the music. As he proceeded, he became more and more excited: and the guests, attracted by his animated movements, formed a circle round him, which I saw increased by some Pandurs, who had entered the room unnoticed. They looked inquiringly into the dancer's face, and whispered significantly to each other.

At length the dance was over. The *Kanász*, who during the performance had no thought for what was going on in the room, now cast a scrutinizing glance around, and met the eyes of the Pandurs fixed upon him. He called to the host, with a careless mien, for a jug of wine, and went slowly through the crowd, as if he were looking for some one, taking good care not to come in contact with the minions of justice. He thus reached the verandah before the Pandurs could approach him. A few minutes later, the tramping of a horse was heard in the court-yard, and directly after the

report of a gun. The people rushed out of the room; I, of course, was one of the number. There we saw by the light of the rising moon a rider, who called out: "Rózsa Sándor wishes the worthy Pandurs a very good night!" In this rider, without hat and bornous, I easily recognized the solo-dancer of the drinking-room.

The witnesses of this extraordinary scene expressed, in their countenances and exclamations, mixed feelings of terror, astonishment and pleasure. All ran to and fro in great excitement and confusion; the Pandurs were the first to jump upon their horses, in order to pursue, and, if possible, to catch the redoubtable *Szegény Legény*. But by the time they had succeeded in making their way through the crowd, Rózsa had already disappeared amongst carts, tents, and cattle, in the direction of the Theiss. I hastened with the others to the river, to witness the pursuit, and came up just in time to see how rider and steed struggled through the turbulent stream towards the opposite shore.

"He cannot hold out long against the agitated waters!" exclaimed an anxious voice near me. "Look there, how raqidly the stream bears him down!" And, indeed, Rózsa for a moment disappeared under a mighty wave.

"His doom is sealed!" cried another, as the

Pandurs, who had just arrived, fired their carabines and pistols at him: "he has gone down!" But he had only dived to escape the bullets. He rose again, and became more and more indistinct as he swam onwards.

"Never fear for his life," said the deep, quiet voice of a herdsman to a group of his comrades. "I rather think this is not the first time he swims across the Theiss. He is well acquainted with the river, and his horse could carry him even through the sea, without endangering his life." The man was right, for we could just distinguish that horse and rider had, after a hard struggle, gained the opposite shore, and in a few seconds entirely disappeared from our sight.

My curiosity was particularly excited by this adventure. Though I had already heard of the daring feats of this *Szegény Legény*, still I wished to gather some further information about him. As I was aware that old Istók, in his capacity of ferryman, must come in contact with all kinds of people, of whom one or other might accidentally be a "poor fellow," I went up to the ferry, from whence the company, at the alarm, had dispersed; so that, on my reaching his hut, only one of his mates sat at his side.

"What a daring fellow that Rózsa Sándor is,"

said I; "did you see, Istók *Bátyám*, how boldly he plunged into the river, and swam to the other bank?"

"There is nothing surprising in this, when you consider his other achievements," he replied, quietly.

"Well, Istók, you will greatly oblige me by telling me something of them. You are, of course, acquainted with Rózsa, are you not?" I inquired.

The old man looked at me with a searching side-glance, and said cautiously: "I have heard of him, now and then."

"No doubt you have, and perhaps during stormy weather he may occasionally have passed the night at the ferry?"

"I should have more than enough to do if I were to ask every traveller his name," was the laconic reply.

"Do not look so innocent, old fox; I am sure you are as good friends with him as with every 'poor fellow' who passes by the Csurgó. You need not conceal it from me; I am the very last who would betray you. Come, my good fellow, tell me all you know of Rózsa Sándor, and the next time I come this way I will bring you a cask full of the best Erlau wine."

"Well," said Istók, after some reflection, and

exchanging a look of intelligence with his mate, "you are neither a County Judge nor a Pandur. You will not bring any trouble upon my head. You know, sir, I live from my business, and I cannot shut my door against any one who knocks: what do I care, either, for the affairs of the county? I have to pay my rent, and must get it from travellers. Rózsa pays me as well as another; and you may depend upon it, sir, in spite of the bad reputation he has in the world, he is not a bit worse than he was before that fatal affray. He does no harm to any one, who does not molest him; and he would have often delivered himself up to the hands of justice if they would have promised to spare his life. But they would not treat with an outlaw, and so he is compelled to lead a roving life."

"What brought him into such trouble?" I asked.

"Some men have ill-luck in everything they come in contact with," said Istók, gravely. "Rózsa should never have been a swinekeeper; should never have touched an axe! His godfather, a magistrate of Szeged, wanted to make him a learned man; but Rózsa preferred the *Puszta* and liberty to books and a study, and escaped from the town to his father, who lived on his *Tanya*, in that neighbourhood, and was a wealthy swinekeeper. There the son tended his father's herds. He was withal

a gentle, pleasing youth, and had only the one fault, that he liked to go to the nearest *Csárda* better than minding his business. There he became enamoured of the host's daughter. Unfortunately for him, the girl was also courted by another *Kanász*. The rivals often quarrelled about her. Once, when Rózsa could no longer bear the seeming success of his comrade, he challenged him to arrange their differences at another *Csárda*. You know, sir, this is the custom of herdsmen when they have any quarrel to settle. After the second bottle, Rózsa desired his adversary to give up the girl: the other refused with vehemence, and after a few sharp words they came to blows. They fought a fearful battle with their axes. Heated by wine and passion, they heeded neither wounds nor the interference of their comrades, until Rózsa slew his rival. He certainly had committed a homicide; yet he did it after the fashion of many gentlemen, who in cold blood kill each other in duels, without being molested by justice. Rózsa, however, not being of high birth, had to suffer for this deed. His repentance was of no avail; he durst not return again to his herd, and so he became a *Szegény Legény*. From that time he was hunted from county to county; from Tanya to Tanya: but the hotter the pursuit, the more skilfully he eluded the

vigilance of the Pandurs, and the more boldly he carried out his schemes. He never robbed from inclination, but only when despair drove him to it. He sometimes so entirely forgets his situation that, as was the case to-day, he has often been within an ace of being taken. His presence of mind and courage, however, have up to this time always helped him out of his difficulties. He says there are many places where he could hide himself, and where he might remain unknown; but after every attempt his yearning for home leads him back to the *Puszta*. Once, when his pursuers pressed hard upon him, he concealed himself here under a pile of nets. Careworn and miserable as he looked, I frankly own, I had no heart to refuse him shelter. A short time after, the Pandurs came up, and sat themselves down upon the very heap of nets. They related their fruitless expeditions, and their future plan of pursuit. Rózsa remained quietly in his hiding-place until the Pandurs set out again; he then escaped in another direction to the *Puszta*. His various contrivances, which he performs with the quickness of lightning, now here, now there, have gained him great celebrity. People speak of him with a mixed feeling of awe and admiration, asserting, through black and white, that he is in league with the devil, and believing that his horse,

a small but fleet beast—he calls it Bogár—which carried him over the Theiss this night, is the Prince of Evil personified. All I know of him is, that he is sword and bullet proof; as was the case with several of my comrades in our regiment during the French war. They stood laughing and joking amidst the fire of the enemy, as safe as if they had been seated by their own firesides, whilst the men, right and left, fell like flies after the first frost. Rózsa thinks that the hemp is not yet grown which is to make the rope to hang him; and when you have heard the following account of his marvellous good luck, you will not any longer be astonished at his temerity.

"About two years since, Rózsa rashly went with another comrade into the Gyilkos-Csárda, near to Szalonta. Several Pandurs, roving in pursuit of him, were accidentally in the village. By some chance or other, the presence of these 'poor fellows' in the *Csárda* was betrayed. Summoning a number of the inhabitants to their assistance, the Pandurs immediately set out to surprise them; which, owing to the dusk of the evening, they succeeded in so perfectly, that Rózsa was surrounded before he was aware of the danger. Seeing that his moments were probably numbered, he decided with his companion to fight hard for their lives. The

challenge to surrender they answered with shots, and fired from the small windows of the room. The besiegers returned the fire, but without effect. After a protracted skirmish, a Pandur, once an Hussár—I knew the poor fellow well—took a decided step. He rushed against the door of the *Csárda*, and, forcing it open, shot down Rózsa's comrade, who defended it; whereupon the Pandur sprang into the room, and attacked Rózsa with his second pistol. He had, however, no time to fire it off, for the latter forestalled him, and felled him to the ground.

"In spite of the momentary advantage, Sándor presently saw that single-handed he could no longer defend windows and doors, as his pursuers, encouraged by the Pandur's successful attack, were pressing towards the entrance of the room. 'I will at least die in the open air,' thought Rózsa; and taking a pistol in either hand, he rushed against the foremost men, who at the sight of him, and still more at the report of his pistols, fell back as he advanced. By this he gained time and space to retreat to the stable, close to the house, where his black horse was, and without the aid of which escape was impossible. Sándor happily reached the place, and shut the door behind him. After hastily saddling his trusty steed, he silently awaited the further development of affairs. He was not left long in sus-

pense, for the besiegers, seeing no end to the fight, quickly decided to finish it at a stroke; they accordingly set fire to the roof of the stable, well aware that by this manœuvre they made sure of their man, whether dead or alive. The interior soon filled with smoke, and the flames spread rapidly. In this emergency, Rózsa had no alternative but to be roasted alive, or meet the balls of the Pandurs and the iron forks of the peasants. He decided for the latter. As the heat became insupportable, he suddenly burst open the door, and, favoured by the dense smoke, vaulted upon Bogár before the amazed people could lay hands upon him. He afterwards said that, once upon his saddle, he felt there was no power on earth that could stop him. Pressing his spurs into the sides of the brave animal, he sprang into the midst of the crowd, receiving a whole discharge of muskets in his face; but the bullets, of course, whistled past without harming him. After breaking the line of the besiegers, he had still to surmount the greatest impediment. On galloping towards the gate, he found it shut; and the courtyard being surrounded by a high wall, every hope of escape seemed suddenly cut off. Despair, however, gives superhuman strength. Rider and steed felt that life and death hung upon a single moment, and made a desperate attempt; impossible as it ap-

peared, they cleared the wall, and thus escaped safe to the *Puszta*."

I thanked Istók for his account of Rózsa's adventures, and as it was late I left the ferry, and went in search of my carriage, where I meant to spend the rest of the night. The wind had already gone down, and heavy clouds began to darken the horizon. The raging of the storm was followed by that peculiar silence which usually reigns over the *Puszta*, and which was increased by the stillness of night. Even the lulling whisper of the reeds, the occasional sound of the bells of grazing cattle, or the distant barking of dogs, did not dispel the melancholy impression it produced. The silence, however, lasted but a short time. Scarcely were the traders aware of the favourable change in the weather than they all began to bestir themselves, each trying to be amongst the first to cross; till at length the landing-place was completely blocked up by a maze of waggons. There, by the light of two mighty fires, kindled on either shore, Istók was already hard at work. But the throng was so great that I had to wait for many hours before I was fortunate enough to pass over the Hungarian Rubicon.

A year after this adventure, I again visited the *Puszta* and the ferry of Csurgó. It was in October, 1848. Since that time an astonishing change had

taken place in the aspect of that part of the country. The solitude was transformed into a vast moving scene; into a camp, extending on all sides far beyond the sight. It seemed as if the inhabitants, all at once increased to ten times their usual number, had determined upon a fresh migration. The plain swarmed with busy groups and troops, together with long caravans of armed men, horses and carts; all speeding on westwards; all decked out with nosegays and ribbons; shouting and singing in their enthusiasm, as if going to a wedding feast, instead of to the battle-field. This strange and gigantic tide of people had been called forth by these magic words: "The fatherland is in danger," which had been pronounced by the Diet and echoed in every Magyar breast. The Croatian invasion, in September, found the land unprotected. But Kossuth knew all was not yet lost, and hastened to the *Puszta* and the Theiss, where the pulsation of the nation's life is the strongest. The words of patriotic inspiration which flowed from the lips of their chief roused the people, one and all, to deeds without precedent. As in former times, a blood-stained sword was carried about to call the men to arms; so a red flag was now hoisted in every community, to announce that a national struggle was at hand. The ancient banners of Bocskay and

Rákóczi were again unfurled, and the arms hallowed by former battles for freedom were taken from their resting-places. Each man who could carry a gun enlisted as a volunteer; it was a disgrace to remain at home!

With great difficulty I made my way along the obstructed roads, and at length arrived at the landing-place. Not finding Istók in the ferry-boat, I went to his hut, and saw, at the first glance, that there also events had influenced the pursuits of its inmate. Istók the ferryman had disappeared, and in his place sat the Hussár of former days, in blue garments, richly ornamented with red braid. His moustache was well waxed, his face looked younger, and his eyes glistened with unusual animation. He was just then busy polishing a sword. I was not less surprised at the sight of his companion, who, stretched upon a fur, was smoking his pipe with a very contented and equally animated mien. In this man I thought I recognised the redoubtable Rózsa Sándor.

"Well, how are you, Istók?" I asked. "It appears to me, from what I see, that you intend once more to fight your way to the end of the world."

"Yes, sir, you have guessed correctly," he said, after a hearty greeting. "I am setting out again; but it is now for a higher stake than the throne of

an emperor, and for a better reward than a few kreutzers. Now, we are not going to fight for our king, but for our fatherland, against a rebel sovereign."

"How so, Istók? Have affairs come to that at last? Is the country really in such danger?"

"Danger enough to bring us all to our saddles," replied the Hussár. "High people in Vienna sing quite a new song, or, if you will, an old one, for our Hungarian ears, and would like to make us dance to it once again. You know, sir, the king has become a traitor, and sold us to the Croats, who, with a great army, advanced as far as Pákozd, in order to rob us of our dear *Puszta*."

"I suppose, at your age, you are exempt from military service?"

"How so?" asked Istók, astonished. "Do you think I could remain quietly here whilst young and old hasten past me to meet the invaders? If I were dead, sir, I would rise from my grave to show the young fellows how in olden times we used to wield our swords."

"And are you really decided upon bearing arms against your sovereign?"

"He is as little a sovereign for me now as the stork there upon the moor!" exclaimed Istók, in a

passion, and making a stroke in the air with his sword. "He has broken his oath and betrayed us, although we stood, with such unshaken fidelity, at his side in his adverse fortune. I was certainly, till now, one of his best friends, for I would have jumped into the fire for him; but that is past for ever. He may picture to himself as many Hussárs as he likes upon the walls of his Burg: from the *Puszta* he will never get another. That I can assure you, and him too! And without Hussárs he and his realm are worth nothing!"

"And who will care for the ferry in your absence?"

"Oh, our women, to be sure," he replied. "They will manage that business will enough for the few passengers that will fall in their way, for the best of them have already crossed. Our watchword is now 'Forward, from the Theiss over the Danube!'"

"Do you remember my companion here?" asked Istók, after a pause, pointing to the silent man upon the fur. "He is Rózsa Sándor, the same who last year swam on horseback across the river."

"Is it not hazardous for him to show himself so openly?" I inquired.

"No; I am glad to say that for a month they have ceased to pursue him," remarked Istók.

"Now, Sándor, tell this gentleman yourself how you obtained your amnesty. You will give the best account of your own affairs."

"I need not tell you," began Rózsa, filling his pipe anew, "how sad the life of an outlaw is; particularly when he feels that he deserved perhaps not the whole rigour of his fate, and would gladly live amongst honest people. I was the most miserable man upon earth. You may, therefore, imagine my joy when I heard of the general rising of the people along the banks of the Theiss and Danube against the rebel Serbians and invading Croats. I held a consultation with my conscience, and found that my forfeited life might yet be of some use, if I could sacrifice it in the service of my beloved country. In this conviction I sent a friend with a petition for an amnesty to the magistrate of Szeged, promising at the same time to recruit a body of riders from the *Puszta*, and lead them against the enemy. My petition was laid before the Ministry, and towards the middle of September an amnesty was granted and sanctioned by the king. Hereupon I repaired to Szeged, and there in the market-place my pardon was read to me. I swore to God, before a countless number of people, to live and die honourably for my fatherland; and I will keep my oath till I breathe my

last! To-morrow I shall march with eighty brave fellows, mounted and armed, to parade them before the Ministry at Pesth, and to make known that they have already distinguished themselves in three encounters with the Serbians."

In a few days Istók set out for his last campaign, as bearer of the old standard of Bocskay, with a division of cavalry. He valiantly fulfilled his patriotic duty, and fell in battle on the Rákos-field, in defence of his trust, against the Austrian cuirassiers. His brave colonel came too late to save his life: he, however, rescued his body and the standard from the grasp of the enemy. There was not one in the corps who knew old Istók, that did not shed a tear to his memory. We almost think it was better for him that he went to rest before the downfall of his country. His heart would break now, if he knew that at the ferry of Csurgó, near his dilapidated hut, a new building has sprung up which serves as a lurking-place for six Austrian gendarmes.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER THE WAR.

Opposite the ancient and royal city of Buda, whose shattered walls and houses still bear manifest traces of the late war, lies Pesth, the present capital of Hungary. This town, even half a century back, of very modest pretensions, has within the last twenty years developed itself in a most surprising manner. The mystery thereof may be set down to the fact of its having been drawn into the magic circle of commercial progress.

From its extremely favourable position on the left bank of the Danube, midway between the western continent with its increasing demands, and the eastern provinces with their inexhaustible natural riches, Pesth must naturally have become the centre of a flourishing trade as soon as she possessed the means of rapid and easy communication. The launching of the first steam-boat there was the commencement of a new era. From that

moment commerce and industry increased with gigantic strides, pouring wealth into Pesth by a thousand hitherto unknown channels. Both the population and the town prospered in equal proportion. Massive granite quays were lined with a succession of gorgeous palaces. Dockyards sprung up; a magnificent suspension bridge spanned the Danube;" and a hundred other improvements followed, bearing ample testimony to the country's material as well as intellectual development, even in spite of Austria, that eternal eclipse to civilisation. It is still worthy of remark that the town, on the side nearest the immediate influence of progress and enterprise—namely its western front towards the Danube—offers striking proofs of their beneficial and refining effect; while to the east and south, where it is bounded by the *Puszta*, as if under the spell of the unadorned yet vigorous nature that reigns there, Pesth is remarkable for the same simplicity which characterises the primitive sons of the steppes, who meet there for the purposes of trade.

A stroll to that part of the town on a market-day, which occurs twice every week, is well repaid by the novelty of the scene. In the extensive markets filled with cattle, grain, and the various raw produce of the *Puszta* and the farther pro-

vinces of the East, may be seen thousands of the best specimens of the Hungarian tribes, transacting business amongst themselves, as well as with Serbians, Wallacks, Turks, Germans, and other races, as diverse in their attire as in their language; and who, in default of a better medium of intercourse, resort to the most natural one, that of signs.

Towards the end of November, 1853, having some affairs to settle in the south of the *Puszta*, I betook myself to the market-places just mentioned, with the view of engaging the conveyance of one of those traders, who, having brought their products from thence to Pesth for sale, generally return home with empty carts, this being the easiest and most expeditious means of travelling to that part of the steppes; as, up to this day, neither railways nor stage coaches have penetrated those districts.

I was fortunate enough to find a Kumanier in one of the inns on the Soroksár road. He happened to live in the vicinity of the very place for which I was bound, and was moreover just on the point of setting out on his homeward journey.

"I hear you are from the south, my good man," said I to the trader, whom the waiter had pointed out to me in the tap-room. "Will you give me a lift in your waggon as far as your village?"

The man, a stalwart elderly Hungarian, dressed in a bunda, his swarthy countenance shaded by a broad-brimmed hat, on hearing himself addressed in a foreign accent, cast an inquiring glance at me, and, while twisting his long moustaches, he asked me abruptly who I was?

"An Englishman."

At this announcement a change instantly came over the Magyar's face. The suspicious expression vanished before a warm ray of genuine cordiality and pleasure. The man rose from his seat, and, taking off his hat, said, with much deference in his manner, "God bless you, sir; you belong to that noble nation who so hospitably received and still entertain my unhappy exiled brothers. I will gladly take you with me as far as you like to go."

"And what is your charge?"

"What is my charge?" rejoined the trader, with a proud and half-offended air. "Now, tell me, sir, would it be fair of me to take money from an Englishman for such a trifle? No, no; it would be downright ingratitude. Travel in my cart where you will, and moreover be my guest, if it pleases you to tarry under my humble roof; but never ask me again what is my charge!"

Thus matters being arranged, with a dispatch outstripping all my expectations, I found myself

on the following morning already on the road to the Puszta, seated on a heap of fragrant hay, and borne rapidly onwards by four fleet horses. By the side of my worthy conductor was a young man, who, I observed, had but one arm. Imagining that he might have lost it in battle, I inquired whether he had taken part in the late war.

"Yes, Gazsi was a Honvéd!" replied Lázár, the trader, with a proud glance at his son. His arm was shot off at the storming of yon fortress," he added, turning round and pointing with his whip in the direction of Buda; which, with the surrounding chain of mountains, ending in the steep and rugged rock called the "Blocksberg," form an extremely picturesque background to the flatly situated metropolis.

"But you do not fret at the loss of your arm, Gazsi?"

"No, father," was the ready reply. "I lost it in my country's service, and here is still another," stretching out his right arm, "with which, God willing, I will yet pay back the Austrians for the loss of the other!"

We had not quite traversed the Rákos-field, which commences at the outskirts of the town, and where in former times the numerous nobility, armed and mounted, were wont to assemble, to

hold their diets and to elect their kings, when, as if in derision of those lofty historical remembrances, several gendarmes, armed to the teeth, rushed out of a *Csárda*, and, seizing the horses, demanded our passports. Lázár made a sign that he could not understand German; whereupon they repeated their demand in bad Hungarian. After satisfying themselves as to his papers, the gendarmes inquired who I was.

"An Englishman!" answered Lázár fiercely.

"An Englishman!" echoed the sergeant; "probably one of those emissaries whom the rebels in London are constantly pestering us with. Well, this is a matter for investigation, and I shall immediately inform our lieutenant of it." With this he retraced his steps to the *Csárda*, his comrades guarding the waggon, lest I should attempt to make my escape. In a short time the officer made his appearance and examined my passport. He asked me several invidious questions, and at last reluctantly dismissed me, with a warning not to set foot again upon the *Puszta* under similar suspicious circumstances.

"Such is the insulting treatment we are now compelled to endure!" exclaimed the trader, after putting his horses into a gallop, to get as quickly as possible out of the reach of those vultures, as he

called the gendarmes. "With one hand they hold us by the throat; and with the other they empty our pockets. What a difference between former and present times!" With an uncommonly vigorous oath, called forth by his rising indignation, Lázár hereupon administered a smart lash to his innocent steeds, who, not accustomed to such treatment, tore along, until pastures and heath, herds and draw-wells, flew dancing by in rapid succession.

During this race I lighted a cigar, and offered one to old Lázár. He, however, declined taking it. As I had seen him smoking a pipe just before, I was anxious to know the cause of his refusal. "It was not from any wish to offend you that I declined, sir," he rejoined, a cloud suddenly overcasting his honest features; "but, since the Austrians have even forbidden us the free use of our own tobacco, unless we sell it at a very low price to them and buy it back for six times that amount, we have given up both the growth and use of it in our community."

"I understand; but what have you just been smoking?"

"Nothing but vine leaves steeped in a decoction of plums; a poor substitute indeed for tobacco, but still they give out smoke, and—this dreadful state of things cannot last much longer!"

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; I am sure of it. The best proof is, that the Austrians, in spite of their pretended sway over the land, are afraid of us. Even in broad daylight their people always go out in troops armed with guns and swords. Yet, not a week passes that one or other of them does not suddenly disappear.' Their fear is carried to such a pitch," he added, with a contemptuous wave of the hand, "that about a year ago they even took our saddles away, lest we should change over night into Hussárs; into avengers of our fatherland. But how can that avail them? They cannot tear out our hearts, and in them lie their bitterest foes."

I could well comprehend that those much detested tools of Austrian justice had an instinctive dread of meeting the wrath of a discontented people on the solitary *Puszta*. The mighty ocean never produced an impression at once more wild and desolate, than did the interminable steppes at the time of my traversing them. The sky, of a dull leaden hue, seemed to press downwards upon the parched plains, which stretched away in sad, fatiguing uniformity, till horizon and sky were blended into one. Through the hazy atmosphere the poles of the draw-wells looked like so many masts of stranded ships; the herds of white cattle,

which now and then crossed our track at full speed, seemed twice their ordinary size, the illusion of the moment lending to them the appearance of so many huge spectres; and the plaintive tones of a shepherd's shalm, that at intervals mingled with the distant bells of the flocks, sounded almost unearthly, as they came and went on the wings of the wind.

As twilight approached two horsemen dashed past in anxious haste, taking no farther notice of us than by a hurried return of Lázár's loud greeting.

"Poor lads!" he muttered with a sigh. "They were formerly Honvéds, sir," he said, in reply to my question as to who they were. "Now they are outlaws, because they refuse on any terms to be pressed into the Austrian service." The trader had scarcely satisfied my curiosity, when a troop of riders were seen emerging from the increasing darkness. This time they proved to be seven armed gendarmes, who no sooner caught sight of us than they stopped and surrounded our waggon. After carefully examining our passports and every corner of the vehicle, in quest of a stray Honvéd or something worse, they questioned Lázár as to whether he had seen a couple of horsemen, and which direction they had taken.

"They rode over there to the right," he replied. "You may soon overtake them if you can put any mettle into those worn-out hacks of yours."

The men set off in the direction pointed out, and were presently out of sight.

"You have put them on a wrong scent, my good man: the Honvéds turned off to the left."

"Do you suppose, sir, I would betray my own countrypeople to such highwaymen? Not the poorest amongst us would sell his brother for all the treasures of their emperor. And a Honvéd finds ready shelter everywhere."

As the full darkness of night set in, Lázár turned the horses from the track which had guided us up to this time, and slackened his hold of the reins, saying that it was of no use trying to drive them any longer; they would find their own way to night-quarters better than he. The docile animals thus left to themselves went on at a good pace, taking a track which they had doubtless often trodden before; for in about half an hour the barking of dogs greeted our ears, which became every moment more distinct; until the steeds suddenly stopped in front of a high gate, against which the dogs sprang furiously. After a while a deep voice called the dogs to order, and then inquired who we were and what we wanted.

"I am Lázár, from *Nem-kell-Király!*" Hereupon the gate was thrown open, and we drove under an arched gateway into the court-yard of a *Tanya*. Presently a couple of men came forth and busied themselves with unharnessing the horses, while we groped our way with half a dozen large growling shepherd's dogs at our heels towards the dwelling, guided by a light held by some unseen hand in the door-way of the house. This door led into the kitchen, and from thence we entered by another into the large dwelling-room, which was sparingly lighted by a tallow candle. In one corner was an enormous oven, heated with a fuel of reeds, which a boy continually supplied through an opening in the kitchen. In another corner stood a bedstead piled-up to the ceiling with feather-beds and bolsters; a few benches ranged along the white-washed walls, and a long oaken table, completed the scanty furniture of the room. Upon the bench near the oven sat the wife of the *Gazda*, busy with her distaff and spindle.

"*Isten hozott!* God brings you," said a man enveloped in a bunda to Lázár, at the same time slightly raising his hat. After a cordial greeting, and questions as to health and flocks, the *Gazda* cast an inquiring glance at me.

"You need not fear him, *Dáruszm*"—namesake

—said my driver, with a nod of his head; "he is an Englishman, and consequently our friend."

No sooner had I been introduced under that propitious appellation, than the *Gazda* welcomed me with another and very hearty "*Isten hozott!*" bidding me take the warmest corner at the oven, without farther inquiry as to my name or business.

Such unbounded confidence speaks volumes for the respect in which the people of England are held by the Hungarians; and it certainly calls forth a feeling of pride and satisfaction, that the very name of an Englishman, at least in that country, suffices to identify you with all that is noble and honest.

"Excuse my boldness, sir," began the *Gazda;* "but, as you are an Englishman, you perhaps know or have heard something of our exiled brethren in your land. Can you tell me what they are doing? Do they still hope to return to us once more?"

I explained to him, that for many years I had lived at Pesth, and consequently, much to my regret, could not supply him with the wished-for information.

"I should, sir, beyond all others, have liked to know the fate of my landlord, a kind gentleman of the name of Szórói," said the *Gazda.* "He was driven with the rest from Hungary, and now he has lost his whole fortune: and his poor lady, too;

oh, what misery!" There was a momentary pause, filled up with the genuine expressions of regret from the herdsman and his friend; and then the *Gazda* again inquired whether the great *Pál Mester* was still living?

On expressing my ignorance of that name, he asked, somewhat puzzled, if I did not know my own minister? It then occurred to me that he possibly alluded to Lord Palmerston,* which really was the case; and I gratified his curiosity as far as it lay in my power. Meanwhile the wife of the *Gazda*, whom Lázár called *Örzsi Néni*—sister Elise,—after a short absence in the kitchen, reappeared, and, wiping the table with her apron, spread a white cloth upon it, and produced a dozen wooden spoons and a green earthenware plate; the latter, together with a knife and fork, being destined for my especial use. These preliminaries completed, she served up a huge bowl of reeking *Gulyás-hús*, consisting of well-spiced meat finely minced, several jugs of milk, and a cheese. Behind the hostess came eight sturdy fellows in fur cloaks and hats. In grave and slow manner they spoke

* The name of Palmerston, under the popular denomination of *Pál Mester*, is familiar to every one in Hungary; the peasantry especially looking upon him as the great supporter of their country's cause.

the usual "God give you a good evening;" and, at the summons of the *Gazda*, we all, with the exception of *Örzsi Néni*, seated ourselves at the long table. The host, doffing his hat, the rest following his example, said the short but impressive grace, "God bless our evening meal," and began the attack by taking his share of the immense loaf, which must have weighed about fifteen pounds. It was then passed from hand to hand, each man cutting off a mighty slice with the clasp-knife hanging from his belt, till it had made the round of the table and returned, greatly diminished in size, to the starting point. Beside the *Gulyás-hús*, the hostess provided me with some right savoury sausages and a jug of wine.

"I have nothing better to offer you to drink, sir," said the *Gazda* apologetically. "Since the Austrians have laid so heavy a tax upon wine, we have neglected our vineyards on the *Puszta*, as their produce does not pay the expenses now."

During the meal, the men seldom spoke; and, as soon as the bowl was emptied, they again donned their hats and seated themselves round the oven.

"Whose turn is it to mount guard to-night?" asked the *Gazda* of his lads. One of them presently started to his feet and silently made his exit.

"How fares the world with you, my lads?" ex-

claimed Lázár to two men who sat at the farthest corner of the oven, and in whom I recognised the fugitive Honvéds. "I thought you were at least ten miles south of this."

"No, *Bátyám*—brother;—we thought it safest to return to our beat. Our pursuers will look for us anywhere rather than here."

"True! And what are you about now? How is your chief, Rózsa Sándor?"

At the mention of the Hungarian Robin Hood, whose acquaintance I had made four years previously under such peculiar circumstances, all my former curiosity revived. I felt the more interested in him as his irreproachable conduct, after he had received his amnesty, and his indomitable bravery during the war and subsequently, had greatly added to his popularity, and combined to invest his feats with something like the fascination of romance. My interest was still farther heightened by the fact, that the Austrian Government dreaded him sufficiently to set 1000*l.* upon his head. On hearing the name of Rózsa Sándor, therefore, I made an involuntary exclamation, the cause of which having been explained, I requested the Honvéds to give me, as far as consistent with their chief's safety, an outline of his proceedings since our meeting at the Theiss ferry.

The elder of the Honvéds readily complied with my request. "Many as the skirmishes have been," he began, "in which Rózsa was an actor; yet, from his possessing a charmed life, no harm has ever befallen him, and he has returned from the campaign without a wound."

"What do you mean by his having a charmed life?"

"I mean," the Honvéd rejoined, "that no weapon or bullet will hurt him, save those possessing a counter charm, made for example of peculiar material and at a certain time; the secret of this counter charm, however, being known solely to him and his wife, there can be no danger of the Austrians coming into the possession of it. At the close of the war, when Rózsa re-appeared on the *Puszta*, the enemy commenced a persecution against him on a grand scale. But he merely laughs at their threats, and follows up his own patriotic course with the same ardour as if his chief were dwelling in Pesth. By his unremitting energy he has already aided many a patriot, whose life was doomed, to escape from the prison in the Neugebäude and to reach the frontiers. His other services to his country are of no less importance. During this time of disorder he has gradually organized a large body of undaunted fellows, who form a vast net,

extending from the Bakony Forest to the borders of Transylvania; and who execute his orders with a promptness and fidelity truly astonishing. He is chiefly inexorable against spies and gendarmes, who are the most active in bringing our patriots to the gallows, and few of them can save themselves from the grasp of Rózsa or his people."

"But what will become of your fine country, if this state of things continues?"

"I cannot tell you," rejoined the Honvéd, with deep sadness in his voice and mien. "We would willingly live in peace with the Austrians; but they hunt us down like wild beasts. The only course left us, is to defend our individual independence; and we will die rather than submit to slavery."

"I am truly amazed how Rózsa manages to escape the continual vigilance of Government."

"That is no such difficult matter after all. He, or rather the cause he fights for, has friends even in the public offices. The very functionaries, either from sympathy or for money, do every thing in their power to help Rózsa, and they forewarn him whenever any fresh persecution is in the wind. Thus he passes and re-passes, from Pesth to the *Puszta*, without fear or hindrance. Though he usually presses hard upon the enemies of public surety, yet at times he is magnanimous

in the extreme; whereof I will give you a striking example. Not long ago, Rózsa had to carry despatches of the highest importance from Pesth to the Turkish borders. While away on his mission, his wife, as heroic a woman as ever lived on the *Puszta*, had the imprudence to show herself at the capital in open day. She was recognised by a gendarme, and arrested on the spot. Having for a fortnight in vain tortured her in the hope of extorting from her the secrets of her husband, the Austrians shot the unfortunate woman at the Neugebäude. Had Rózsa returned while his wife's fate was pending, he might perhaps have been able to save her, to whom he was as fondly attached as to his country. Unfortunately he was detained on the frontiers and came back just too late. Rózsa betrayed by no outward sign the affliction that fell so heavily and unexpectedly upon him; he merely avoided all society and became yet more thoughtful and taciturn. In spite of his reserve, however, we saw that his mind was occupied by something besides his grief, and we were right in our supposition. At length, having desired us to await him at one of our meeting places, he started with several of his most determined followers for Pesth; and after a few days' absence he suddenly dashed into our camp with a large bundle fastened

to the front of his saddle. Behind him came his men, conducting a gendarme with pinioned arms. They must have ridden hard and long, for their horses were covered with foam. The chief looked fearfully wild and excited, and scarcely allowed himself a moment's rest ere he called out: "To the reeds!" We all, to the number of about thirty, vaulted into our saddles and went forth in the dark night, like a band of spectres, Rózsa, with his mysterious burden, taking the lead on his indefatigable black charger, *Bogár*. A sharp ride of three hours brought us to the appointed place. We dismounted, and, after kindling a large fire, we gathered round our chief, who, meanwhile, had partly taken off the covering from the bundle. And what do you think that bundle contained? It contained the corpse of Rózsa Sándor's wife. As the flickering glare of the watch-fire fell upon her ghastly countenance, she seemed to revive and move her lips, mute and closed though they were in death. It was a sight that thrilled through every heart, and one that will ever be remembered by those who witnessed it. Even Rózsa, with his unflinching spirit, was overpowered and sobbed like a child as he knelt by her side; and we all wept with him, ay, all, not excepting the gendarme who betrayed her. Well," sighed the Honvéd, after a pause, while trying to stay the tears

which started to his eyes at that sad memory,—"Rózsa, after having in a measure recovered his usual austere composure, rose and told us that he had braved a tenfold death to rescue his wife's remains from the grasp of the Austrians, to have them at least buried in free soil. He then asked one of our comrades, an outlawed Protestant minister, to perform the service for the dead, at the conclusion of which we sang the National Anthem. When the grave was dug and the body laid in its last resting-place, Rózsa took his axe and raised it to strike the prisoner, who, more dead than alive, awaited his coming doom. But all at once a change came over our chief's spirit, his upraised arm fell harmless by his side, and, as if touched by his better angel, he exclaimed, with a softened expression in his iron features, 'I came here with the intention of sacrificing you upon the very mound beneath which the happiness of my life lies buried. But, as the wrong you have perpetrated touches my person and not my country, I will avenge it in a manner worthy this solemn occasion. You have brought the greatest misery upon me, and, in exchange, I bestow on you the greatest blessing. I give you your life! Bind up his eyes,' he said to one of his men, 'and conduct him back to Pesth.' His command was executed to the letter. Near the capital the gen-

darme was restored to liberty, and we afterwards heard that the scene in the reeds had so deeply affected him, that he gave up his employ and returned, a better man, to his home in Bohemia."

"That was truly a noble way of revenging himself; and may I ask of Rózsa's present whereabouts?"

"We ourselves scarcely know it, for he changes his quarters often and suddenly, and imparts his plans but to a very few of his most intimate comrades. At this moment I suppose he is in Pesth, to attempt the rescue of the brave Noszlopi, who was arrested a week since."

"God preserve him; he is a true nobleman and patriot!" exclaimed the *Gazda;* "and, besides, a friend of our Governor Kossuth." At the mention of that name, which has such a charm for the common people in Hungary, every hat was raised.

The men now rose to seek their couches. I, too, expressed my readiness to follow their example, and was civilly conducted by the *Gazda* into a sleeping-room, where I had to climb into the high bed by means of a stool. Towards morning, my sleep was disturbed by the tramping of horses in the court-yard, the cause of which I afterwards learnt was owing to the Honvéds having been summoned in the night to meet their chief in the reeds.

After a substantial breakfast of sausages and *Gulyás-hús*, I merely expressed my thanks for the *Gazda's* hospitable reception, as an offer of money would have greatly offended him; and we proceeded on our way, accompanied by the blessings of our host and hostess.

"We shall most probably have a heavy snow-storm," said Lázár, examining the wind, which already drove the large flakes across our path. "We may think ourselves well off if we reach the village before it fairly sets in."

As we went on at a smart pace, a handsome carriage, drawn by two beautiful horses, drove past. Lázár and his son respectfully greeted the single occupant of it. "He is our postmaster," explained the trader; "a good and patriotic gentleman."

At noon we halted at a draw-well, where a herd of unbroken colts had been led to drink. We seated ourselves by the reed fire, at which several *Csikósok* were engaged preparing their simple meal, consisting of bacon which they broiled upon a stick held over the fire. We followed their example and cooked our dinner in the same primitive fashion; I adding to my share one or two cups of tea, the sight of which produced great wonderment amongst the herdsmen, who had never seen tea before.

After an hour's stay we again started and towards evening at length drove into Lázár's courtyard, where men and dogs, in motley groups, rushed forth to give their master a hearty and joyous welcome.

The driver's house, like all other houses in the Hungarian villages, was a long, one-storied, whitewashed building, thatched with reeds, the gable-end looking to the street, with the customary two windows and a rustic seat overshadowed by a solitary tree. In the fore part of the house there are two or three dwelling-rooms, divided by a hall, which serves as a kitchen; then come the dairy, stable, pig-sty, &c., all under one and the same roof. Behind the house is the farmyard filled with stacks of hay and straw, and close to it a garden, the whole inclosed by a yard, which is again subdivided, presenting altogether an aspect of plenty and comfort, if not of wealth.

From the yard I entered the kitchen. There the hostess, a comely matron, was busy at a raised hearth, above which hung a large number of earthenware pots as well as iron and copper utensils. I then went into the best room, where my attention was presently attracted by the usual earthenware oven in one corner, opposite to which stood the best bed, piled up with bedding. In the third

corner hung a glass, and beneath it was a heavy oaken table, with the customary loaf of bread and salt-box. On the white walls hung a goodly array of pots and jugs, in which the inmates often collect their savings as well as sundry odds and ends, which other people usually stow away in their cupboards. A few stools and benches ranged along the walls made up the complement of furniture.

Besides his son, with whom we are already acquainted, Lázár had two daughters, whom he summoned by the names of Boris and Panni. They were pretty young girls, with sparkling black eyes and dark hair, which hung down their backs in a thick plait. They greeted me in a frank and easy manner with the usual "*Isten hozott!*"

I may here remark that the Hungarian women in general possess a large share of personal attraction; their dark complexions, jet hair and fiery eyes betokening their eastern origin. Their temperament forms a striking contrast to that of the men. They are extremely sociable and gay; laughing and singing, like so many birds, during the live-long day, whatever their occupation may be. Yet, notwithstanding their merry disposition, on grave occasions the women, like the sterner and stronger sex, can be earnest and are equally

capable of patriotic devotion. Their pleasing appearance is much heightened by their graceful dress. Over their white linen chemisettes, made with full short sleeves, they wear bodices laced up in front, like the Swiss, and frequently ornamented with gold brocade; then comes a coquettish looking jacket, which in winter is lined with fur. A petticoat of gaudy colours and a thousand folds and high-heeled boots of red leather, constitute the principal part of their attire.

The married and single women may be distinguished by the manner in which they wear their hair; the latter letting it hang down their backs in one long plait, mixed with ribbons; the former rolling it up, either under a cap or a red kerchief, and on Sundays beneath a veil, lightly thrown over their head.

CHAPTER V.

A SPINNING EVENING.

From time immemorial it has been the custom with the Hungarian girls to assemble regularly during the long winter evenings, in numbers varying from six to twelve, for the purpose of spinning; and while their fingers are busily occupied in drawing out the thread, they in turn tell stories or sing in chorus. And if a gipsy with his violin chances to knock at the window, he is sure to be admitted and his services put in requisition. Then, instead of the whirling of spindles, the fair spinners themselves whirl in the mazes of the merry dance, with any of the lads who, either for the sake of hearing or telling stories, or carrying on a courtship, happen to be present.

The period for the spinning evenings is from St. Martin's day to the eve of St. George.

As girls are considered eligible members at the age of twelve, it may readily be imagined that there is no lack of spinning clubs throughout the country.

Their meetings are held at the house of one or other of the spinners' parents during the entire season, each girl providing her own share of candles, firing and eatables.

On entering Lázár's house he informed me, that his best room was for this season to be the meeting place of one of these clubs, and he hoped I should not be disturbed by the noise of the maidens, otherwise he would bespeak a night's quarter for me at a friend's. I assured him that, on the contrary, I should much like to be present. His doubts on that score being thus put to rest, he invited me to join the supper; and we had scarcely concluded a bountiful repast of roasted chickens, with cream sauce, cheese pastics and a jug of good old wine, when the wooden latch of the door was raised, and the first spinner entered. This girl as well as all who followed wore a jacket thickly braided and lined with fur, which, after a naïve and well-mannered greeting, she took off, thereby exhibiting a pair of pretty round arms. She seated herself beside the lasses of the house, and, taking her distaff from under her apron, was soon engaged in dexterously turning her spindle with the forefingers of her right hand. Gradually the others dropped in one by one, till the full complement of eight had assembled.

Among the number was the notary's daughter, who not only wore a handsomer dress than her companions, but was evidently their superior in every respect. All took their seats on the benches around the oven, looking as bright and cheerful as a bouquet of fresh field flowers. Ere the last arrival had well shaken off the snow from her dress, the door again opened and two young men made their appearance; the one, of gentlemanly bearing, was the notary's clerk, and the other a stout lad in braided jacket and trousers, a fisherman.

I soon discovered that another and a stronger reason than that of entertaining the maidens with stories had induced those rustic cavaliers to brave the snowstorm; for each at once took his place by the side of a certain fair one, from whence he never stirred during the evening.

"Rough weather this, Lázár *Bátyám*," said the fisherman, knocking the snow from his hat. "I had some difficulty in finding my way here in the blinding drift. What news do you bring from Pesth?"

"Everything very dear, *Öcsém* Pali,—brother Paul. The Austrians are increasing in number, and their bank-notes decreasing in value."

"Ah! the flies are most numerous when the frost is nearest!" remarked the clerk.

"Yes, but their bite smarts the most then," rejoined the former.

"Whose turn is it to open the evening with a tale?" asked one of the spinners.

"It is Pali *Bácsi's;* he promised yesterday to tell us about the surprise at the Szórói *Csárda,*" said another.

"But before he has the honour of entertaining us," remarked Pálma, the notary's daughter, "he must make a clear breast of all his sins. He must confess."

"Agreed!" exclaimed the rest in chorus; "he must confess!"

The supposed sinner, thus condemned to undergo so heavy an ordeal in the presence of so many fair judges, seemed rather flattered than otherwise; and as soon as the mirth called forth by this suggestion had somewhat subsided, the fisherman set about the work of purification with as grave and resigned an air as the occasion permitted.

He began by stating that, instead of staying at home to mend nets and make baskets and hampers, he had thrown all aside and hurried to the spinning room. After a long list of similar offences, he summed up with an expression of regret, that he had never yet been able, either from want of skill or good luck, to fish out the treasure of

the Fairy of the Theiss; whereby he might have obtained the hand of mine host's daughter, the pretty Boriska. This was all told amidst jokes and laughter; and while the girls debated as to the manner and nature of the absolution, the spindle of the one nearest to the penitent fell to the ground, whether purposely or not remains a mystery. Now, the picking up of a spindle is generally acknowledged with a kiss, and the fisherman, who held the trophy aloft, claimed and obtained the reward from the owner, who, with the consent of the party, granted a second by way of absolution. I plainly saw that this girl was no other than Boriska, for she blushed deeply as she raised her blooming face to the happy fisherman.

"And now," said the latter, "as my sins are forgiven, I will, without further preface, commence the promised story.

"In the beginning of February, 1849, at the time when our troops were drawn up along the left bank of the Theiss and the Austrians occupied the right bank, I rented a portion of that river in the neighbourhood of Szolnok. From my accurate knowledge of the place, I was often able to cross unobserved from one side to the other, and in this way became pretty well acquainted with the position of the enemy's outposts, one of which, a cavalry

picket of some twenty men, kept guard at the Szóröi *Csárda*, behind a small grove of willows. I occasionally gave a hint thereof to a lieutenant named Compér, of the Sixth Hussars, who were then stationed opposite to the *Csárda*, and told him, if he were disposed to risk an attack upon that picket, I would conduct him safely across the Theiss. Compér was just the man for such a hazardous undertaking. He presently asked and obtained permission to carry it out in any way he deemed best; and he fixed upon the night of the 9th of February for putting his plan into execution. I, of course, was to act as guide. Besides the commander there were twelve Hussars, all determined fellows, who at the appointed time made their appearance at my hut on foot, their spurs bound up to prevent them from clinking, and their unsheathed swords under their arms. The ice on the river having just began to thaw, I was obliged to lay planks across several of the breaks; nevertheless, in half an hour we all stood safely on the right bank. The night was so calm that we could hear the striking of the clocks in the church spires of Szolnok. It was then two in the morning. The small quantity of snow that still lay upon the ground, from being partly melted served to deaden the sound of our steps and our white mantles to disguise our persons. Thus we

approached the line of the Austrians without arousing their suspicion. On arriving behind the willow grove, at the other end of which stood a vidette on horseback, we halted, and Compér sent private Koszta, a man of undaunted courage and immense strength, to surprise the scout; the sign of his success was to be an imitation of the howl of a reed wolf. Koszta presently set off on his mission. In a few minutes we heard the signal and hastened to the spot, which was only a couple of hundred paces off. There we found Koszta standing over the corpse of a Dragoon, and holding his horse by the bridle.

"As Koszta afterwards told us, he approached the vidette on all-fours. The latter, doubtless, mistook him for a dog, and, after whistling once or twice, thought no more of him. Once near enough, the Hussar sprang to his feet, and before the Dragoon had recovered from his surprise brought him to the ground with a thrust of his sword. After fastening the horse to a tree, we marched on to a general attack. In front of the *Csárda* two other mounted Dragoons kept guard, who, at the sight of us, were so frightened, that instead of defending themselves and their post, they merely discharged their pistols at random and fled towards Szolnok.

"The work now went on apace. In fact, we had

no time to lose, as in half an hour assistance might easily arrive from head quarters. On hearing the report of guns, the Austrians, who slept with their horses in a roomy stable, instantly bolted the door and fired a few shots through the loopholes on our summoning them to surrender. This resistance, however, was to no purpose; for at the order of Compér the roof was fired, which soon compelled the inmates to capitulate. Thus seventeen men and as many horses fell into our hands. But while we were occupied at the stables, a strange as well as stirring scene was going on in another part of the building. Immediately on our surrounding the *Csárda*, Koszta had forced his way into the dwelling-room and there found the commander alone, yet not asleep. Scarcely had the Hussar broken open the door when he was greeted by a pistol shot. The ball only slightly grazed his breast; whereupon the officer raised his sword. In the very act of striking the deadly blow, the blade hit the low ceiling and snapped in two. 'Well done, my brave fellow!' cried Koszta; 'we will now settle our account together on more equal terms.' On this he threw down his sword, clasped the officer round the body, and, after wrestling for awhile, brought him to the ground, keeping him down until he had no longer power to resist. At this moment Koszta

first became sensible of the danger with which he was threatened by the rapidly-spreading flames. He had scarcely time to escape through the window, when the roof of the *Csárda* fell in, burying the Austrian officer in a fiery grave.

"Meanwhile the booming of the signal guns in Szolnok warned us of the approach of a reinforcement, and we made all haste in gaining the opposite bank of the river. In the hurry of crossing, three of the captured horses fell into the water and were carried away by the tide. Save this, we lost none of our booty, which, with the prisoners, we bore in triumph to head quarters."

"And what reward did you receive?" said one of the maidens."

"Money I would not accept; but I asked for and obtained a black steed, which I still have, and from whose back I have effaced the imperial mark by burning my own upon it."

"We should now like to hear a tale of gentler lore," said Pálma, the notary's daughter. "Perhaps *Csakbácsi* will give us one from his store."

The clerk at once assented, and thus began: "While at college in Debreczen, my favourite companion was a youth as clever and handsome as any other student, but who, like myself, had one great drawback, and that was poverty. We gained

a subsistence by giving instruction to the younger boys; and by dint of mutual support we struggled through our college life, though not without a good share of the privations which in the daily life of the poor spring up again and again, like mushrooms in a rainy season.

"Among our acquaintances in that town was a wealthy magistrate, in whose family my companion gave lessons in languages and I in music and singing. Besides our pay, we had a general invitation to dine with the family on Sundays. Notwithstanding that we had great difficulties to surmount as to the outer man, on the whole we contrived to make our appearance on those occasions sufficiently creditable. Once, however, it happened that we, together with many of the townspeople, were invited to the christening dinner of the magistrate's youngest child, which was to take place at his country house. This was quite an extra occasion. As we only received the friendly summons late on the morning of the appointed day, it took us both by surprise and particularly my friend, inasmuch as he had only one shirt, having sent the rest of his very scanty supply to the wash on the previous evening, and that one, unfortunately, owned but a single sleeve. Time pressed, and rather than remain behind he resolved to make the best of a bad busi-

ness, and present himself in the mutilated garment, with which, in other respects, there was no fault to be found. At the appointed hour we made our appearance at the country house of our patron. The feast went merrily on, and Szerencsi soon forgot his sore point in the pleasure of the moment. In the afternoon the party adjourned to the garden, where there was a skittle ground. The male portion of the company were presently engaged in the game of nine-pins, in which we were invited to take a part. The day being very hot, the players threw off their coats. I had long since forgotten Szerencsi's wanting sleeve, and was not a little perplexed when he reminded me of the fact and asked my advice, as he could not well make an exception to the rest of the company, either by wearing his coat or leaving off playing without any apparent cause. As I was about suggesting some probable excuse, which was no easy matter, the master of the house, perhaps imagining that the poor teacher stood upon ceremony, came up and in the kindest manner urged Szerencsi to make himself at home, and play away in his shirt sleeves like the others. Now, I must tell you that my friend was proud as well as extremely susceptible; and an exposure of his poverty in so ridiculous a way would have driven him half mad.

You may therefore fancy what he suffered, with his patron at his side, unconsciously pressing him to make a public exhibition of his penury. No, that he would never consent to. You might as well have asked the chesnut tree hard by to lay aside its bark. But now came the climax of his misery. The magistrate's daughter, a lively brunette,—who had often cheered him with her sympathy, and whom Szerencsi had long worshipped in silence,—remarking his embarrasment, ran up to him and in a whisper begged him at once to do as her father suggested, since she plainly saw by his manner that he was annoyed at finding one of his guests so ill at ease in his house. A hint from such a source was a command with Szerencsi, and he felt himself compelled to yield, rather than risk the goodwill of his patron, and thus perhaps be shut out from his paradise. Yet how could he yield? Either way he was lost! In this dire dilemma a bright idea suddenly struck him. Can you guess what that was?" said the clerk to the girls.

"He ran away to get another shirt!" answered one.

"There was no time for that," replied the narrator; "and then, you know he had not another at hand."

"He disclosed his secret to the magistrate's daughter," cried a second.

"No, Szerencsi was too proud for that."

"He pleaded sudden illness," suggested a third.

"No, no; that he could not do, for he looked the very picture of health. Well, I see you will never guess," continued the clerk, "so I will tell you the secret. All at once it occurred to Szerencsi that, as he had at any rate one sleeve and the defaulter happened fortunately to be the left, he might slip his coat off the right arm, and thus compromise matters. The attempt was made and proved most successful. His spirits rose, and he subsequently played with such signal results, that the best players retired utterly discomfited from the scene of action."

"Bravo!" cried Pálma, "and what has become of your friend?"

"He has shirts and all things in abundance now. He worked and studied hard; graduated as a doctor of divinity, and through his patron's interest, he was presented with a good living beyond the Theiss. Shortly afterwards, he obtained the hand of the daughter of the magistrate of Debreczen, whose heart he had possessed for many years."

"Come, girls, it is now supper time," observed

the hostess, bringing in various eatables in large bowls from the kitchen, which she placed in a row upon the table. The first bowl contained maize, which had been roasted in an iron riddle over a straw fire. This is a favourite dish on the steppes, and a very palatable one I found it. The second was filled with boiled maize, and the third with wafer cakes.

Each girl put her share of the repast in her apron and ate it while still working away at her spindle.

Supper had scarcely been served, when the dogs in the yard began to bark vehemently and to spring against the gate.

"Who can be out this wild night?" said Lázár, looking at his wife.

"Certainly not a friend," she replied, "for the dogs know all who come and go here."

They were still speculating as to who it could be, when a loud tap was heard at the window. "Open the door directly!" called out an imperious voice; and to lend additional weight to the summons, the head of an individual wearing a military cap appeared before the window.

"Good heavens, a gendarme!" exclaimed the hostess in a panic; and every face turned pale at the ominous word.

"Go Gyuri, open the door," said Lázár to his son.

The lad obeyed, and returned accompanied by two gendarmes, enveloped in grey mantles. The dogs still continued to growl and snarl outside the door, as if they, too, highly disapproved of such intruders.

"The next time I come here I will teach those beasts to respect the Emperor's functionaries!" muttered the sergeant.

"They harm none excepting, perhaps, unwelcome visitors," rejoined Lázár, sternly. "What is your errand?"

"I have heard that a stranger alighted at your house this evening," continued the sergeant, looking round; "yes, there he sits, I fancy. Why did you not immediately inform us of his arrival?"

"Who would set out in weather like this, for the sake of such a trifling affair? I thought early on the morrow would have done just as well."

"You are mistaken, my friend; the laws must be respected, or people must suffer for infringing them," rejoined the sergeant, authoritatively. "You have concealed a foreigner in your house; thereby you have incurred a fine of five florins, or a week's imprisonment. Therefore, either count down the money or go to prison?"

"As I am unfortunately the cause of this unpleasant business," I said, stepping forward, "allow me to pay the fine. Here are the five florins."

"And who are you, sir?" demanded the gendarme, eyeing me with great suspicion.

"He is an Englishman!" called out Lázár, drawing himself up to his full height, and stepping between me and the intruders, ready to protect me in case of need.

To put an end to the scene, I handed my passport to the gendarmes; whereupon they withdrew to report to their officer.

"You see, sir, how matters stand with us!" exclaimed Lázár, with an outburst of passion. "I am, or I was at least formerly a *Nemes Ember*, *Nobilis**, and no one dared to enter my *Curia*† without my permission; and now not even the rights of hospitality are respected!"

"Hush, man, for God's sake! If they hear you talking in that strain we are undone," whispered his terrified wife. "Let them wander on in their

* There are many thousands of *Nemes Emberek* in Hungary, who, though rustics, yet, prior to 1848, enjoyed equal privileges and political rights with the first magnates in the land.

† *Curia* is the house of a *Nemes Ember*.

unrighteous way; they will, depend upon it, sooner or later reap what they have sown."

"Amen!" said the men.

Lázár would have fain gone on making apologies to me, but I requested that the amusement of the evening might proceed, and by degrees the gloomy impression wore off.

"As we have just been so roughly reminded of the existence of those gendarmes," observed Lázár, after a pause; "it will be as well to tell this gentleman, Gyuri, how those very men only the other day handled poor Janko, the Honvéd."

Thus challenged, the son after sundry coughs and hems related the following episode:

"Just at the time I recovered from my wounds —that is to say, in July 1849,—the Hungarians fought a battle with the Austrians a few miles from this village, whereby the latter were gloriously beaten. A day subsequent to the fray, I rode over the battle-field, to see what damage had been done to our wheat. On entering the field, which had been sadly trodden down and where arms and corpses lay scattered around, I saw a human form rising from the ground, who, though clad in the Honvéd Attila, yet in other respects looked more like a spectre than a living man. On perceiving me, he stretched out his arms imploringly and

staggered forward, ever and anon exclaiming with a faint voice, 'A Honvéd! A Honvéd!' Truly he was in a miserable plight and, as his sole answer to all my questions was the word 'Honvéd,' it was evident that he knew nothing of Hungarian; so, without further parley, I lifted him on to my horse and rode slowly back into the village. While my mother and sisters administered every comfort in their power, I fetched the barber, who found six sword cuts upon him, but fortunately none of them were mortal. Having dressed his wounds, the barber, to whom Janko made himself understood, told us that the poor lad was a Slovack from the county of Zips in the Carpathian mountains, who had enlisted in June as a volunteer; and the battle near our village was the first and last in which he had taken part during his short military career. He was amongst the skirmishers when the enemy's cavalry made a sudden dash upon them, and while most of his comrades better versed in tactics formed a square to withstand the shock, he and a few others were overtaken in the act of retreat, cut down and left for dead. When consciousness returned he found himself in a wheat-field and, not knowing where the enemy might be, he did not venture to show himself, and thus re-

mained for forty-eight hours with his wounds undressed, without food and exposed to the burning sun. During that time he tried to satisfy his hunger with the ears of wheat; but at last he became so exhausted that he could scarcely scare away the dogs and birds of prey hovering about the scene of carnage. We nursed him during two months, by which time he was able to leave his bed. He gradually learnt our language, and was so tractable, honest and industrious to boot, that my father determined to take him into his service. We cautioned him to keep clear of all public places, to avoid coming in contact with the gendarmes; and for a couple of years he followed our advice with the best success. Janko was a tall, handsome fellow, and in the course of time a mutual affection sprung up between him and my poor sister Panni. Now don't fret, my dear girl," said Gyuri consolingly to Panni, who, at the mention of her lover, burst into a passionate flood of tears. "Be of good cheer; who knows but that Janko may shortly return, and perhaps as a Honvéd officer, too! Only think of that! And then you may wear your pretty tricoloured ribbons again. Well," he continued, "my father, seeing Janko's untiring industry and good temper, gave the lovers his blessing, and the

marriage was to be celebrated in a few weeks, when a circumstance occurred which suddenly put an end to their happy prospects.

"On returning home one afternoon with the oxen, Janko, instead of coming round by the outskirts as was his wont, took the shortest cut through the village, when, on passing by the large inn, he saw several waggons belonging to the Slovacks who attend the yearly fair in Szeged and, who had just halted to bait their horses. The sight of his countrymen and the sound of his native language naturally made him forget both prudence and danger. He left the oxen and made up to the group of Slovacks, amongst whom he had recognised his own father. The happy moment of meeting was but short, for among the witnesses of the touching recognition stood one of the very gendarmes you saw here this evening, and who had no sooner convinced himself that Janko was not one of the inhabitants and thus most probably a fugitive Honvéd, than he laid the heavy hand of justice upon him. The youth, otherwise patient and enduring as a lamb, was excited to madness by such an unexpected attack and struggled vigorously with the gendarme, at the same time calling to the bystanders not to allow him to be dragged away from his father. You perhaps know sir, that the Hun-

garian is always ready to act in defending the oppressed, whoever they may be, and accordingly several lads threw themselves upon the sergeant and his companions, who had hastened to his assistance. In a short time the fray ended with the entire discomfiture of the Austrians, and the victors, together with Janko and his father, went off in triumph to the reeds, which extend for miles beyond the village, and where, owing to the swampy nature of the ground, nobody save the villagers would dare to enter. The adventure made a great noise in the county. The Austrians took alarm and a battalion was instantly dispatched hither, as if our village had really been in a state of insurrection. The reeds were scoured, but none of our people being disposed to act as guides, the soldiers were unable to discover any traces of the objects of their search. Finding all their efforts of no avail, the Austrians issued a proclamation to the purport that if the young men did not come forth from their hiding-place in the space of twenty-four hours, whenever they did re-appear and were caught they would be shot without mercy; on the other hand, no injury would be done them if they obeyed this summons. The parents, terrified at the peril in which their sons were placed, betook themselves to the reeds and persuaded the fugitives to return.

But scarcely were they within reach of the soldiers than, in spite of proclamation and promises of pardon, they were all seized and sent off, together with poor Janko, to the army in Italy, his father being sentenced to six months' imprisonment for having been the innocent cause of the tumult."

"That was, however, not all!" said Lázár, as his son concluded. "Not content with having robbed us of several of our best lads, the village had likewise to pay a fine of two thousand florins to compensate the gendarmes for the thrashing they got at the inn."

The fisherman's turn again coming round, he related the following adventure, which he assured us he had hitherto kept a profound secret.

"Last May business was so brisk at the ferry of *Szebb Jövö*, that I was summoned to help old Mihály for a month or two. One night, at the time of full moon, it fell to my lot to keep watch by the ferry. Having tarried drinking and smoking till near midnight, in Mihály's hut, I went to my post, and laid down upon my bunda. I could not have slept long, when I was aroused by some one hailing loudly for the boat from the opposite shore. I rowed over and found a number of people waiting, who scrambled into the boat, and with whose aid I easily re-crossed the river. From

the festive attire of my passengers I guessed that they were a wedding party, and I was strengthened in my conjecture by the presence of two gipsy musicians, who tuned their instruments during the passage. And no sooner had the party landed than they assembled under the silver poplar called the Witches' Tree. The gipsies struck up a *Csárdás* and presently the people, one and all, were drawn into the vortex of that fiery dance; the very earth shaking, so vigorously did they stamp and spring. As I was watching the merry scene, a stately matron came up and challenged me to join the dance. Of course I could not refuse and without farther ceremony led my partner into the circle. The dance might have lasted an hour, when the crowing of the cock was heard in the village. Music and dancing all at once ceased, and wedding guests and musicians disappeared as if the earth had swallowed them up. Not a trace of them remained. I stood alone breathless and in utter bewilderment. But no, not quite alone: at my feet lay my weighty partner, who at that moment must have been changed into the old boat which we had brought to shore for repair a few days before. By degrees I made out that I had been charmed into taking part in one of those *Sabbats*, which, it is said, are held by the witches from the neighbour-

hood at full moon under the ferry poplar, and that it could only have been Lucza—you all know the old hag—who had played me such a trick; since I encountered her in the fields the previous night collecting Maydew, and unintentionally disturbed her as she was preparing a charm. My suspicion was changed into a certainty from the circumstance, that, early the next morning, Lucza was the first to pass the ferry, when she inquired with a malicious grin how I had spent the night."

"But, Pali, the whole affair must have been a dream! There are no witches now," remarked the clerk.

"That is all very well," replied the fisher. "Philosophers may say so if they please; but only let one of them dance half-an-hour with some fine lady who suddenly changes into an old boat, and they will certainly in this respect not pretend to be wiser than a simple son of the *Puszta*."

"Now, girls," said Lázár, "let us hear your pretty voices." Having agreed upon a song, which happened to be the National Anthem so strictly prohibited by the Austrians, the girls, with the clerk at their head, began to sing it in a sweet under tone, lest they should be heard by some unbidden listener and thus bring the master of the house into difficulty. Young and old joined in the

anthem, which, in its solemn and plaintive undulations, occasionally varied by martial strains, so vividly pictured the feelings of the mourning people, together with their impassioned patriotic ardour. The tones spoke to every heart, the deepest chords of which gradually responded to their magic touch, until the song was repeatedly broken by sobs; and, stranger though I was, I felt so overpowered by the scene that I could scarcely repress my tears.

After singing several other melodies of a more cheerful character, another story was called for; but an interruption of a more serious nature unexpectedly put an end to the amusement of the evening. The dogs in the yard again began to bark, which soon changed into a lengthened howl, joined by all the dogs in the vicinity.

"I do dislike to hear the dogs howl," said the hostess, "it never bodes any good. I should not wonder if some death has occurred in the village."

The howling went on, and sounded yet more ominous amidst the roaring of the storm, which drove the snow with wild vehemence against the panes. The momentary silence in the room was interrupted by a knock at the window, making some of the most excitable of the girls start upon their feet.

"For God's sake open the door, Lázár Bátyám!"

cried a voice from without; "I want you all to help me!"

The men rushed into the yard to learn the cause of the summons, and the girls with superstitious fear depicted in their pale faces drew close to each other. The former returned, accompanied by the coachman of the postmaster, whom we had met on the road in the morning. The lad looked completely exhausted. In broken sentences he informed us that on returning with his master from a visit in the vicinity they were overtaken by the storm on the *Puszta*, not far from the village, and had lost their way. They drove about for hours, until at last they got fast in a morass. The postmaster, who was in bad health, ordered the coachman to mount one of the horses and ride off for help; while he would wait his return in the carriage. The coachman started in a blinding snowdrift, and for six good hours rode round the outskirts without knowing where he was; and at last he felt so bewildered and disheartened that he would have given up in despair, when a *Csikós*, happening to fall in with him, conducted him to the village, which was scarcely half a mile distant. The coachman could give but little clue as to where he had left his master. But no time was to be lost in idle discussion; so Lázár dispatched his

men to the neighbours for farther aid, and then told his son to bring the horses out. "It will be a hard night's work," he said; "but the postmaster is a good man and we will do our best to save him."

The clerk and fisherman likewise expressed their readiness to join the party of searchers; accordingly horses were brought for them too, and in a few minutes the four men rode out into the fearful night. The girls went home, and I, with the assistance of a stool, mounted my high bed.

The next morning was as stormy as the previous night. Lázár returned late in the afternoon, and told me that their perilous expedition had been to no purpose; and that if the weather continued the poor postmaster's doom was sealed. The storm did continue that day and the following one too, and kept me prisoner in the house of my hospitable conductor. On the third day the sky cleared up and I immediately started for the place of my destination. As a thaw speedily set in, the snow in a few days had almost entirely disappeared from the plains. Feeling interested in the postmaster, on my return I called at Lázár's door to learn the particulars of his fate, when I was informed by my honest friend that his body had only lately been discovered.

CHAPTER VI.

SZÓRÓL.

I WAS about proceeding on my journey to Pesth, when the clerk, accompanied by an elderly gentleman, stepped up to my carriage and introduced him to me as his patron, and the notary and schoolmaster of the village. The latter expressed himself much gratified to make the acquaintance of an Englishman, and pressed me to spend the remainder of the day at his house. I declined, however, alleging the pressure of business which awaited me at the capital. But all in vain. The hospitable Magyar would not hear of a refusal, and wound up another entreaty on the plea that it would be dark in an hour or two, when I should be compelled to put up at some miserable *Csárda*. "Send away your carriage," he concluded, "and I promise to provide you with four horses which will take you to Pesth with railroad speed. I at length yielded, and alighted to accompany the notary, who dwelt

in the vicinity. His house stood near the church, its lofty spires surmounted by a cock, and another handsome building, presenting a broad front to the street, which formed a favourable contrast to the peasants' cottages around. On my tarrying for a moment before it, my companion said in a tone of regret: "That building was formerly our village school, and was erected, together with my own dwelling, at the expense of our late landlord, Szórói, who, himself a man of learning, felt fully convinced that a good education forms the basis of the prosperity of the people. But at the end of the war, Government thought proper to prevent its original destination, and it is now used as quarters for an Austrian commissary and a detachment of gendarmes."

"Is it possible that Government can act so arbitrarily even in this respect?" I asked.

"Why not?" he replied, twirling his moustaches. "That is one of the least of the acts of injustice we have to complain of. We can easily find another place that will answer the purpose as well. The evil lies in the decree of the Austrians, that our children are henceforth to learn the language of our oppressors. This was equivalent to closing the schools. For when it came to the knowledge of the parents they unanimously determined to

have their children instructed privately; so that I am now obliged to keep two teachers to go about to the different houses, assisting in the education of the village youth."

The notary's appearance as well as his manner of expressing himself, betokened more energy and patriotism, than was compatible with his safety. I remarked this to him, but he replied with a smile of contempt: "The Austrians cannot cope with me! They have already twice thrown me into prison for declaring my opinions too freely, and have twice selected a notary from their own people in my place. But each time they were burnt out of their dwellings; after that, no one would accept the appointment, so that on my second liberation I, without opposition, resumed my old office."

The notary's house stood in the midst of a garden. It was a pretty one-storied building with six windows in front. Along the side looking towards the yard ran an arched gallery, from whence the doors led into the different apartments. The sitting-room, with its windows opening into the street, contained besides a sofa and other handsome pieces of furniture a piano, several choice engravings, and a bookcase, in which I discovered Shakespeare's works. The windows were filled with flowerpots. Everywhere not only the greatest cleanliness pre-

vailed, but likewise a certain air in the arrangement and use of things, an indication of cultivation as well as of good taste.

While the notary was engaged in discussing politics with me, supper was announced, and he led the way to the dining-room, where the clerk and the teachers had already assembled. Shortly after, a woman of lady-like appearance, habited in deep mourning, entered by another door, leaning upon Palma's arm. I was at once struck with the expression of grief portrayed on her beautiful features. Her tall youthful figure was bowed, as if under the pressure of some unseen burden. Her classical face, of almost deathlike pallor and transparent in its delicacy, was lighted up by dark eyes, glowing with such unnatural fire that the sight made me shudder. Over her luxuriant hair, already streaked with gray, she wore a black veil, which rendered her face still more wan looking.

Palma conducted the lady to an arm chair at the head of the table, and each one greeted her respectfully; but she seemed scarcely conscious of what was going on; and her presence rather painfully affected the spirits of all present, who carried on the conversation in whispers, and even the notary hushed his usually loud voice.

During supper, Palma bestowed her entire atten-

tion upon the pale lady, and in her earnest, child-like care for her wants, no longer appeared the same gay, careless girl that I had seen only a short time back at the spinning evening. Her gentle charge ate but little, and when the fruit was brought in she rose to leave the room. At the door she turned round, as if some sudden thought had struck her, and said in a low supplicating voice to the notary, "Remember my child, dear Peleskei, and bring him back to his unhappy mother!"

When she was gone, the notary remarked, with a sigh, "In that poor unfortunate creature you see a sad victim of Austrian dominion in our land! She was formerly one of the loveliest, best, and most accomplished of women, and now!"

The circumstances which surrounded that strange apparition were blended with so much mystery, that I could not resist asking my host to give me some explanation thereof.

"She is the wife of a nobleman," rejoined the notary; "the same who built the school, and to whom, besides other property, the half of this village belonged. The invasion of the Austrians brought both him and his family to ruin. He lost home, wife, and possessions; his wife, however, lost still more—she lost her reason! But, that you may the better understand the incidents which re-

duced her to her present condition, I will give you the history of Szórói himself. The particulars of his life as an exile I learnt from one of his friends, who clandestinely returned about a week since from England.

"At the outbreak of our late war of Independence, many of the patriotic men still lived who, some thirty years before, gave to our nation the first impulse to a lasting and progressive development, by laying the legal foundation for salutary reforms and improvements.

"It is remarkable of that period, as well as of the Hungarian character in general, that those men, in spite of their independent patriotism, as if under the spell of some infatuation, invariably preserved an unbounded feeling of attachment and confidence towards the reigning dynasty, and, confounding the interests of our country with those of a single family—interests in every respect opposed to each other—they never sought to familiarise themselves with the idea, that the most efficacious and only means of rendering our land truly happy and great was by delivering it from the stranger's yoke. To such men the history of past wrongs and oppression taught no lesson for the future; and they were only, though too late, convinced of their fatal short-sightedness by per-

sonally suffering from the effects of those crying violations of right, by which in the end the dynasty forced the most loyal people in the world to insurrection.

"Long after the first breach of the royal oath, even after blood had been shed, they still clung to the possibility of a peaceful arrangement; until, seeing our national existence daily more menaced by armies and rebellion, they no longer wavered, but rose, however old and cautious, in lawful self-defence, serving our country with the sword or the pen, as circumstances demanded.

"One of these loyal reformers was Szórói.

"Representative of an ancient and noble family, and gifted by nature with abilities of a high order, Szórói, during his long political career, successively filled all the important posts which the ambition of a nobleman could desire, without becoming subservient to dynastic interests. He had been twice elected member of the Diet, and for several years had acted as chief magistrate of this county, taking with him, when retiring from the arena of public life, the thanks of the people, and leaving in our annals many records of his honest and patriotic conduct.

"Once freed from the weight of official duties, he settled on his large estates in *Boldog-Emlék*, near

the Theiss, giving himself up wholly to the enjoyment of domestic life, which for us Hungarians possesses peculiar charms. Faithful to the custom of our forefathers, Szórói left the gates of his ancestral castle open by day and night; welcoming every one, whether friend or stranger, who drove into his court-yard, and evincing for the English a peculiar predilection, which he shared with most of his countrymen. His house, his stables and his preserves, he placed at the disposal of his guests with an open-handed liberality hardly to be met with elsewhere, only jestingly stipulating that they were neither to set fire to his house, ride his horses to death, nor extirpate his game. But Szórói was not less famed for his hospitality and the varied pleasures he offered to his visitors, than for his cultivated mind and taste for the fine arts. His collection of paintings comprised several masterpieces of both the ancient and modern schools, and he was not a little proud of showing them to his foreign visitors, who scarcely expected to find such treasures in the midst of the Puszta.

"The crown of his happiness, however, was his young and accomplished wife, whom he had known from childhood, and, at the death of her parents, had married at an advanced age. He adored her with all the fervour of a still youthful heart, and

the birth of a son, heir to his name and fortune, left nothing to wish for in the completion of his domestic bliss.

"In this enviable position, the news of war found Szórói. As a person of consideration and devoted patriotism, he was chosen commander of a battalion of national guards for the county, which onerous distinction he willingly accepted, in spite of his age and notwithstanding that he had to part with a fondly-loved wife and child, and all the wonted comforts of life.

"At that time he thought, as little as the rest of his countrymen, that the campaign then commenced would prove anything more than a short military excursion; Szórói, therefore, set out at the head of his battalion, without taking any precautionary measures against future reverses, promising his family a speedy return. But 'man proposes, and God disposes.' The gigantic development of events required Szórói's constant presence in the camp, preventing him putting his intention into effect; when the sudden and tragic termination of the struggle at one fell stroke destroyed the social and political prosperity of the nation, involving his own in the ruin of millions around him. But yesterday fortune's favourite, to-day Szórói wandered forth a roofless outlaw, hunted from place to place by a

merciless foe, in whose Vandalic grasp no life, no right, no property were safe.

"Under such circumstances, the most prominent patriots had no alternative but certain death or indefinite exile; the latter scarcely less awful than death, as it at once severs the most tender ties of home and happiness, taking everything save the consciousness of slow decay, and leaving in the yearning and aching heart a void, which nought else can fill up.

"After several narrow escapes, and without once again beholding his family, Szórói contrived to cross the frontiers in the company of a young friend named Arpád, with whom he reached Hamburgh in safety. At that time Szórói numbered more than sixty years.

"Although not a man to be overtaken by despair at the first outset, yet his trackless future was shrouded in such gloom and hopelessness, that at times his energies entirely succumbed to an overwhelming dejection. And no wonder that it was so. For is it not almost maddening to feel condemned, like another Ahasver, to roam restlessly from land to land, with no welcome awaiting the wanderer, no couch prepared on which to rest his weary limbs, haunted by the idea of being everywhere an intruder, a burden, and thus driven about

by fate's caprices, never again to anchor in that placid, sunny bay called Home? The unusual excitement which, during a period of overstrained activity, had sustained his strength, having now subsided, a prostrating reaction took place in Szórói, the more destructive, as it was not even brightened by the buoyancy of youth. For him, the recovery of his home lay beyond the circumscribed limits of the few wintry years he had still to live, and on the darkened surface of his present there floated only one single spot of light to cheer his blighted spirit, and that was the prospect of a re-union with his family, for whose sake he resolved to try to struggle on.

"Having sent the news of his escape to his wife, which she, however, never received, and summoned her to join him in exile, he, together with Arpád, decided at once to cross over to England, where he hoped, for the sake of our fallen country, the people would give him a cordial welcome.

"Under the influence of this hope he embarked on board a Hamburgh steam-packet, and on the third day landed in London, at the St. Katherine's wharf. A dark and foggy November day welcomed the exiles to the world's metropolis. This, together with the blackened, dismal places they beheld from the steamer, considerably dimmed their bright

visions, which their reception at the Custom-house by no means cleared up. There they were not only subjected to a description of their persons, as if suspected of some evil doings, but on leaving the interior of that very prison-like building, they had besides to pay certain duties, the names of which they never learned.

"Such treatment on the soil of a free nation contributed little towards dissipating the gathering clouds of sadness, and the farther the aged exile penetrated into the vast and gloomy city the heavier they pressed upon him.

"'A custom-house is a very cheerless entrance to the land of a great people!' remarked Szórói, with a deep sigh, to his companion, during their drive to Leicester-square, where they alighted at one of the French hotels. From thence the friends set out to call upon a countryman, who, from his long residence in London, would be the best able to trace out a plan by which they might save their future existence from entire shipwreck.

"In a distant corner of the West-end they with much difficulty discovered the object of their search. 'Thank God!' exclaimed Szórói, on entering the house, 'we are once more under a friend's roof.'

"'Have you only lately arrived from Hungary?' asked Kordélyi, their host, after a hurried greeting.

'How do matters stand there? But I need not ask—everything is lost!'

"'Except glory!' remarked Szórói; 'and we trust, the knowledge of that may have even reached England.'

"'No doubt it has,' replied Kordélyi. 'The English testify unbounded sympathy in our behalf. Yesterday they held another crowded meeting, at which several spirited speeches were made against usurpers and their misrule.'

"'This is cheering intelligence,' said Arpád; 'although our hapless position requires more than a mere display of oratorical power. Look, for example, at our gray-haired compatriot; he has sacrificed all for his country, escaping solely with his life, and now possesses not even strength and health to gain bread by the labour of his hands. He, and many others in the same situation, would prefer, were the choice theirs, private benevolence to public demonstrations.'

"'I will do all I possibly can for our old friend,' suggested Kordélyi; 'but you must not form any bright idea of a reception like one in our own land: here you do not find such unlimited hospitality as we were wont to offer to strangers. The English are peculiarly reserved towards foreigners; and we cannot expect that they will relax for our sakes.

All we may hope for is a subscription, which has, indeed, already commenced, and is proceeding favourably. Moreover, I can introduce you to some families; you will then become acquainted with English customs and manners, and thus be able to judge for yourself.'

"Kordélyi kept his word.

"The novelty and the interest surrounding them at first attracted much attention, and they were subsequently invited to many a gay party, where Szórói's venerable mien and noble figure made a deep impression on all present: his hopes gradually revived with the increasing number of their acquaintances.

After each entertainment he felt more convinced, that one of those solicitous friends who had expressed such warm sympathy for his misfortunes, would sooner or later find a quiet place of refuge for him. Delighted with this imaginary prospect he often conferred with Arpád on the one darling theme of his heart, and with touching fondness drew a picture of the contented life he would lead in some secluded country spot with his family, who, so he believed, were already on their way to England, and in whom his dearest treasures of home would be restored.

"Poor old man, how illusory were his hopes!

How differently were his expectations, his wishes, realised!

"He had soon to learn what trifling weight was to be attached to verbal assurances of sympathy. The experience of each succeeding day strengthened the painful conviction that few, if any, were really sincere: at any rate but for the moment. As he entered the gay saloons with an expression of feigned pleasure, not one of those who overwhelmed him with all kinds of questions ever inquired how it fared with him in the land of his exile; whether he really felt as he appeared? whether that tranquil but pale face did not sadly belie his heart? and whether he had not, besides his moral sufferings, to contend with heavy material cares? His friends thought they helped him to forget his misfortunes in permitting him a fleeting glance of their happy firesides, a momentary refuge within their luxurious homes. It soon became evident that even for that short-lived hospitality he was indebted chiefly to curiosity and a love of lion-hunting. For, when the novelty of his first appearance had worn off, and his hosts discovered that little amusement was to be derived from a man acquainted neither with the language nor the customs of the country; when they reflected, too, that the destitute exile might even

solicit their aid, they became gradually indifferent and reserved; till at last, he plainly saw that he was no longer a welcome guest.

"This, and many other petty vexations, which in the ordinary course of life would have passed almost unobserved, added continual aliment to Szórói's melancholy, and naturally led him to the comparison of his present humiliating position with his former independent one, and the result only increased the evil. In the bright sphere of his past life he had contracted a far too favourable view of the world and of human nature. Surrounded by plenty, he only knew the enviable position of a benefactor; and now, for the first time, he had to learn, to his dismay, the immense difference that exists between affording and asking relief. This sad lesson the old man acquired at a moment when an unusual pressure of adversity had already shaken the lofty structure of his moral convictions, which, unable to withstand such incessant assaults, now gradually fell to ruins at every rude touch of the outer world. For days Szórói shut himself up in his room, feeling less miserable in solitude than in contact with a world between which and his dreary existence yawned a daily widening gap of disappointed hopes.

"The protracted uncertainty he was kept in by

the silence of his wife filled his mind with apprehensions of a still more serious nature. Months had now elapsed since he left his country, and still, notwithstanding the letters he had repeatedly written, no news from the Theiss had reached him. It was possible, he thought, in the unsettled state of affairs there, that their correspondence might have been intercepted; but then he knew, that several of his exiled friends had long since received written tidings from their sorrowing relations. There might be yet another reason for this incomprehensible silence; another, that in sleepless nights presented itself, like a fearful spectre, to Szóröi's excited fancy, namely, that a wave of that deluge which inundated his fatherland had possibly destroyed his home, burying under its ruins all dearest to him in life. No, that could not have occurred; a merciful God had no doubt preserved them and probably the following day he might receive the longed-for tidings. Yet in vain did he try to soften his apprehension with such-like airy arguments. Day after day the postman's knock re-echoed in his yearning heart; but he came and went and still no foreign letter made its appearance. This, however, was not all: to his moral sufferings was added the pressure of material wants. One day Arpád, who had the manage-

ment of their small household, informed his old friend that their means of living were rapidly melting away. This was but too true. The little money they had brought with them had been long since spent, also some jewels sold; and, as there appeared no chance of succour from home, they could almost foretel the moment when Want with all its terrors would cross their threshold. It is true a committee of some noble-minded Englishmen had in the meantime been formed for the benefit of the exiles. They offered money to Szórói, as well as to others, on condition that they immediately crossed the Atlantic. But the old man's susceptible mind, which sighed for gentler assistance, shrunk at the thought of accepting aid in that way, and for that purpose. Was he to be blamed for such delicacy? Perhaps he carried it too far. A man in his destitute circumstances, in his forlorn position, had no right to refuse assistance in whatever shape it was offered: no right to think what sort of relief would gratify him most and wound him least. Szórói, however, could not overcome his reluctance to accept a relief which would only widen the distance between him and his family: and with a feeling both of sorrow and humiliation he declined the tendered assistance, preferring rather to endure even greater hardships.

Thus difficulties visibly accumulated in the household of the two exiles.

"Their superfluities—and they certainly were not many, neither of much value—had been gradually sold or pawned, without warding off the advancing evil. From all that Szórói had saved in his hasty flight, one treasure alone remained in his possession, which, as the dearest remembrance of the past, he always carried about with him. It was a Madonna of Carlo Dolce's, of small size, but a masterpiece in the expression of heavenly sweetness. The picture had been presented to him by his wife on their wedding-day and the sight of it had often comforted him in her absence, particularly during the dreary period of his exile. It was the nearest confidant of his hopes, his silent prayers, his frequent sufferings. The price of this treasure would doubtless relieve him for a considerable period from that inexorable pursuer, Want. But could he possibly give up that cherished souvenir? He thought not. It was like parting with the last link that bound him to his earthly blessings, and he felt almost convinced that if he did so, some other great calamity would befall him. Nevertheless the day came when he could no longer delay. With tears in his eyes the old man kissed his Madonna, and set out with it to an auction which, he had read in

the newspaper, was to be held on that day in the vicinity of Piccadilly. He went to the appointed place.

"'You have come rather late,' said the auctioneer; 'by whom is the picture?'

"'By Carlo Dolce.'

"'What price do you ask?'

"'I think it is worth at least fifty guineas.'

"'That is too much for such a small thing,' remarked the auctioneer, after a cursory glance, which showed that he estimated a picture more for its size than its merit; 'you may perhaps get the half of that sum, as *our* public prefer historical to religious subjects.'

"'I shall be satisfied with any price,' replied Szóródi, with an aching heart.

"'As the catalogue is already printed,' explained the clerk, 'we cannot insert your picture in it. But if you will stay to the end of the auction, which begins in a few minutes, I will then try to sell it.'

"What was to be done? Longer delay would but cause still more pain, and bring no rescue, so he resolved to get over it at once at any cost. He took a chair in a corner of the room, which slowly filled with people, and waited till the sale commenced. The pictures hanging on the walls were

put up and knocked down, with tiring uniformity, amidst the buzz of the bystanders. The transaction took much time, and the hours passed with a tediousness which made each one appear like a day. Szóröi's patience was nearly exhausted. To divert his restless mind, he had already several times counted the number of the persons present and the paintings, and minutely examined everything remarkable in the room. Gradually every face grew familiar to him. But even when he had succeeded in lulling himself into momentary oblivion of his painful errand, his eyes wandered again to his Madonna, which hung just opposite to where he sat, and his thoughts resumed their old dreary course. Then he fancied he could trace in her sweet, soft glance a shade of reproach, and he felt inclined to rush to the spot where his talisman hung and rescue it from profane hands. But again the threatening figure of Want stepped between him and his Madonna, and kept him spell-bound to his seat of torture.

"These were hours of intense agony for the poor exile. The remembrance of by-gone happy days rose one after another before him, when he with a generous hand had patronized the young artists of his country; when he himself had purchased at high prices many a valuable picture for his

own gallery, now sacked or perhaps utterly destroyed by the invaders; when he, with just pride, had led his delighted guests through his sanctuary of art; when—oh, how many images connected with such saddening *Whens* rose and sunk on memory's faithful mirror, that, darkened as it was by clouds of sorrow, still reflected them with painful distinctness. 'At last the voice of the auctioneer recalled him from the glowing past to the cheerless present.

"By the time the last picture in the catalogue was sold, so few persons remained that the auctioneer asked Szóród if he would not postpone the transaction to a more opportune occasion.

"'I am weary of delay!' exclaimed the exile, with a feverish flush on his pale face.

"His picture was accordingly put up. In breathless anxiety the old man listened to every bid, but none exceeded the fourth part of the sum named; for the Madonna, as it passed from hand to hand, was examined with not very admiring eyes. At last one of the bystanders, after a lengthened inspection, offered fifteen guineas, for which, as no one outbade him, he obtained a masterpiece.

"'You have got even less than I anticipated,' remarked the auctioneer, as he handed the money to Szóród, keeping back ten per cent. for expenses.

"The exile took the money mechanically, and

walked slowly towards the purchaser to take a last farewell look at his Madonna. He could not help saying what a capital bargain he had made.

"'Do you think so?' asked the other, in French.

"'Of course I do. It is one of Carlo Dolce's best,'

"'You are mistaken, sir; the picture was sold as the production of one of our artists.'

"'That is not possible,' exclaimed Szórói, in surprise; 'I have had it in my possession for many years and can answer for its being a genuine one.'

"'Well, we may easily come to the truth by asking the auctioneer himself.' They accordingly inquired, and found that he had indeed in mistake given it out as the painting of an English artist.

"'In that case it is but right to compensate you for the loss you have incurred,' said the buyer to Szórói. 'I am an amateur and not a dealer in paintings, and I candidly acknowledge that the picture is well worth fifty guineas. Will you, therefore, allow me to add the remainder of the sum to the amount already paid?'

"With some hesitation Szórói consented. He then mentioned his name and circumstances to the amateur, who, already prepossessed in his favour, listened with visible interest to his recital and in return gave him his card and a hearty invitation to his house.

"This unexpected generosity, which brought the affair to so favourable a termination, put the old exile in unusually good spirits. He hastened home to communicate the events of the day to his friend. Arpád listened delighted to his companion's tale, and asked with no small degree of curiosity who his new acquaintance was?

"'He handed me his card,' said Szóröi, looking into his memorandum book. But it was not there, nor could he find it in his pockets, which he searched one after another. He had evidently lost the only clue to one of those few men who evince in actions, rather than in words, the nobleness of their character.

"The money Szóröi had thus obtained drove want from his dwelling; yet sorrow and ill health remained his stationary companions, sharing in his silent sufferings, and hastening on the consumption of the vital flame, which, now fluttering and low and kindled no longer by hope, was fast burning away.

"Thus time wore on, week after week closing another page in life's account, till the inspiring season of spring arrived, filling alike hut and palace with its genial sunbeams, its fragrant breath, its cheerful songs. Even the exiles, although far away from their own May, felt its animating influ-

ence, and left their dwelling oftener than was their wont, to ramble across the soft green turf of Kensington Gardens.

"On one occasion, whilst examining the shrubs and trees along the gravel walk, Szórói discovered upon a tablet at the foot of a young tree near the northern entrance the following inscription: '*The spreading Hungarian Elm, native of Hungary, date of introduction unknown.*' Had the exile suddenly met with an old friend, he could not have been more joyfully surprised than he was at the sight of a tree from his native land. The discovery awoke in him deep emotion. He eagerly touched its boughs, which were spreading over the gravel walk, and looked with tenderness on the delicate leaves just shooting forth at the mysterious call of nature. For a long time he remained standing before the tree, and whilst his eyes seemed fixed upon it, his thoughts wandered to the scenes of his infant sports. From the shattered wreck of old age he saw in the far, far vista, the images of youth unroll like fairy dreams, with their cloudless sky and radiant hues of innocent mirth and glowing happiness, images so cherished and regretted throughout life, and on which his spirits still lingered with unspeakable delight. 'How well I can remember,' said Szórói to Arpád, who stood silently

gazing by his side, 'when, fifty years ago, I so narrowly escaped being killed by a fall from one of the ancient elm trees which surround the church of *Boldog-Emlék*, and beneath whose shade I so often played with others of the village youths. You know, Arpád, in the spire of our church a kind of hawk build their nests, the taking of which, owing to their almost inaccessible position, was looked upon by us as a wonderful feat of daring. The few boys who had accomplished it were so constantly boasting of their prowess that I, too, determined to share in their glory. I had, however, not only to climb to a dangerous height, but likewise to elude the vigilance of the churchwarden, a grim old man with spectral features, who, when he caught a boy on any mischievous errand within the precincts of his jurisdiction, administered with provoking coolness a severe castigation, without any consideration for rank or station. But, in spite of all such obstacles, I courageously went on with the preparations for carrying out my scheme. The warden had in his employ a lad, whom he kept for the purpose of ringing the bells, cleaning the church and other minor functions. By sundry presents of sweetmeats I succeeded in bribing him over to my side and one day he stole the keys of the church for me from under the bolster of his master's bed, which

enabled me to mount to the belfry, in a remote nook of which the coveted nest was. I had already climbed up the frame work, and was in the act of taking the prize, when all of a sudden the voice of the churchwarden resounded from below, filling me with a terror not to be described. I at once forgot bird and nest, and commenced a rapid descent, but escape was too late. The pursuer had already mounted the stairs, and stood in a menacing attitude in the doorway of the belfry. My only chance of retreat was thus cut off. At the sight of his ghastly-looking countenance I was overcome by a kind of superstitious awe. I only thought of escaping his presence, without caring for the consequences, and at once jumped out of the nearest window. Luckily for me, just below that window stood a lofty elm tree, upon which I fell, tumbling and rolling from branch to branch with fearful rapidity, until I reached the ground. Notwithstanding my break-neck journey, I sustained no injury, save some slight bruises. My mother then expressed her conviction that I was reserved by Providence one day to play an important *rôle* in the world's affairs. She little dreamt what a destiny awaited me!'

"From that time the exile felt so great a predilection for the place where his 'young compatriot,'

as he called the Hungarian tree, stood, that he went thither almost daily, watching its growth with the same pleasure and interest as if it had really been a being endowed with consciousness. Once, when sitting with Arpád on a bench opposite his favourite, he said: 'See, friend, this tree is like myself, an exile; like myself, it will never again touch its native land; but it has the advantage over me of being young, of having a rich soil, wherein to spread and nourish its vigorous roots and of being tended by careful hands; whilst I am an old trunk, thrown by a sudden storm upon barren ground, where the already withering roots will soon die away! Hark!' he exclaimed, after a pause, 'how merrily that blackbird warbles its songs amidst the shady boughs! Where are the birds who, for so long a period, cheered my spirits with their joyous lays? Alas! the howling tempest has scared them; they have flown away never again to return, leaving only their cold, lonely nest behind! How truly the poet says:

Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.'*

"Among Szórói's countrymen who were fortunate enough to escape the hand of the executioner, was a former neighbour, who arrived in London

* In misfortune you will be left alone.

during the summer. He possessed full details of all that had occurred on the Theiss during Szórói's absence, and, as it may be imagined, the intelligence was extremely depressing. Executions, confiscations, imprisonments, corporeal punishments, were the alternating events of the day. Of course Szórói's property had been seized and he himself condemned to death in contumacy. But all this was of secondary importance to the old man; he only anxiously inquired after his family, of whom he had as yet received no tidings. His neighbour, as if embarrassed by the knowledge of some painful secret, at first evaded a direct reply. The longer, however, he hesitated, the more impatient Szórói grew, urging him to reveal whatever news he had to communicate. Then, suddenly seized by a terrible presentiment, he said: 'For God's sake do not keep me on the rack; tell me at once that my wife is dead!'

"'No, I can assure you she is alive,' replied his neighbour from the Theiss.

"Szórói, now in a rapture of joy, sprang into the arms of his compatriot, exclaiming, with tears of gratitude, 'Thank God, she lives! O tell me all you know of her; and of my boy! How I long to embrace them once again!'

"Strange to say, his countryman did not share

in this joyous outbreak, and became only more grave and embarrassed. After a lengthened silence, he said: '1 see it is useless to keep you any longer in suspense, and to conceal from you a truth which sooner or later you must learn. You are no doubt aware, that in the neighbourhood of *Boldog-Emlék* our troops had a bloody encounter with the Russians in July. Your wife, foreseeing that in the event of fortune turning against us, the village, and especially your mansion, as was really the case, would be pillaged, resolved to fly with her child and all that she could hastily collect in money and jewels, and hide herself among the reeds until the danger had passed. In order to render her appearance less striking, she put on a peasant's dress, and set out in a common waggon drawn by four of the fleetest steeds in your stable.

"'Unfortunately, in driving across the Puszta, she was spied by a patrol of Cossacks, who immediately commenced a hot pursuit after her. Although your horses were encumbered with a waggon, yet the small "tartars" of the Cossacks, however fleet, were no match for them in a race of many miles. This fact soon became evident, when Feri, your brave coachman, who afterwards related to me the details of that deplorable event, gave the reins to the steeds. The distance between them

and their pursuers visibly widened, the course of the Theiss became each moment more distinct, and the swamps overgrown with reeds, where they would have been safe from every danger, lay before them, almost within a gun-shot, when an unforeseen accident gave a most disastrous turn to the exciting scene. On that part of your estate the bogs are surrounded by a wide, long ditch, to prevent the cattle from straying amongst the reeds.' Feri knew that right well; but he was also aware of the existence of a bridge over it, for which point he made in a direct line and at full speed. True enough, the bridge stood there; but as it had not been used during the whole campaign, the frail fabric, consisting of a few crossbeams and posts, was quite out of repair; so much so, that as the leaders set foot upon it, one of them got its leg between the posts. This sudden check made the spirited animals unruly and Feri lost ten precious minutes in attempts to extricate his horse. He at last succeeded, but it was too late! During that fatal halt, the enemy had gained upon them and came up just in time to prevent the coachman recommencing the race. One of the band immediately fired off a pistol, which brought the poor fellow to the ground; whilst another ruffian made a thrust with his lance at your wife. Although

she escaped unhurt, a faint shriek proceeding from her boy, whom she held in her arms, told that the deadly weapon had found another victim. Having plundered the waggon, and leaving Feri apparently dead beneath it, the Cossacks tore the corpse of the child from its mother's convulsive grasp, and dragged her, as a suspected spy, before an Austrian court-martial, who, unable to extract anything important from her either by threats or blows, threw her into prison. After a month's detention, having been accidentally recognised by an Austrian officer, a former friend, she was set at liberty. But the fearful scene on the Puszta, and the cruel treatment in prison, had in the meantime gradually undermined her reason, and on leaving that abode of horror she had forgotten all memory of the past, save that of her child.'

"At the beginning of this woeful tale, Szórói appeared greatly agitated; but as it proceeded, as every succeeding word, like so many blasts of the scorching Simoom, swept over the core of his being, his agitation changed to a calmness still more fearful to behold. His face became ghastly, his eyes staring and inane, and the struggling words froze upon his lips. He sunk, crushed by the thunderbolt of a doom from which there was no recovery.

"When the old man's death-like torpor had

abated, Arpád attempted to console him. He listened patiently to his young friend's words; but they fell upon a deadened ear. Once only Szórói interrupted him by saying, with appalling calmness: 'Do not pain yourself in vain efforts to stay with a frail thread a block in its rapid course down a mountain ridge.'

"A few days later Szórói left his dwelling, as he said, for a short walk. Yet hour after hour elapsed, and he came not. When evening passed, and midnight approached, without his return, Arpád grew alarmed. The next morning the postman delivered a letter, in his friend's handwriting, whose terrible contents at once put an end to all conjectures concerning the fate of the exile. The letter ran thus:

"'My good Arpád,—Ere you receive this, I shall have closed my account with this world. It was, properly speaking, made up at the moment when I learnt that the last tie which bound me to this life had been so cruelly severed. Since then I have wandered about in perpetual agony, delaying my departure solely because I wanted power to carry out my design. Acquaint only our dearest friends with my death; the world here will not care about it, having cared little for me when living. I have no wish, no will, to intrust you with: still,

there is one single favour you may grant to your friend. Should the time ever arrive for you to return free to our Theiss, to our Puszta, then, dear Arpád, think of the old man, who so willingly sacrificed his all in their defence and whose spirit will constantly linger around those spots where he spent his happiest days. Farewell.

'Szóról.'

"While the noble-hearted patriot was pining in exile, his wife spent weeks in patient watching by the gate of her former prison, where she fancied her darling boy still dwelt, imploring every passer-by alternately in wild or gentle accents to restore to her the only object on which her darkened reason still fondly lingered.

"As soon as I learnt her deplorable condition, I hastened thither with my daughter, and by dint of intreaties and assurances, we at length succeeded in inducing her to return and live with us; but not until we had promised to deliver her boy, who, she fully believes, is still alive, from the power of the Austrians. She is perfectly harmless in her madness and as gentle as a lamb. My Palma guides her about at will. She never speaks, but to remind me of my promise to rescue her child. This is altogether a melancholy story, sir, but not an isolated one. Go where you will in our poor country,

you are haunted by such like spectres in one shape or other!"

I felt so distressed by what I had seen and heard, both on the *Puszta* and in the notary's house, that, in spite of his kind and hospitable reception, I was very glad when, early on the following morning, he announced that a carriage with four steeds was already at the door awaiting to convey me back to the metropolis.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROSCRIPTION.

A FEW weeks after my return to the capital, a friend called upon me for the purpose of obtaining letters of introduction for London. On my inquiring whether he wished them by way of business or pleasure, he asked me if I knew a Dr. Honvágy?

"From hearsay only," was my answer.

"That same Dr. Honvágy," he continued, "has a brother in exile, with whom he is or rather was in correspondence, which, however, was restricted entirely to family matters. This, together with the doctor's reputation for patriotism, was sufficient to make him suspected of treasonable connexions; and accordingly three days ago he was suddenly arrested and imprisoned in the Neugebäude. Not satisfied with this unjustifiable proceeding, the Government at the same time issued a decree of proscription against his whole family,

on the plea that their house had ever been an asylum for outlaws and emissaries. In forty-eight hours Honvágy's wife and children are to leave their home and all dear to them, and wander forth to foreign lands with breaking hearts, and the prospect of perishing in some unknown corner of the world in want and misery. You may, therefore, imagine what benefit you will confer on that family by furnishing them with a few letters of introduction for England to those who will look kindly upon them in their misfortune."

"When are they to leave Pesth?"

"To-morrow morning by the early train."

I dismissed my friend with a promise of rendering the proscribed family all the assistance in my power, and wrote half a dozen letters, which I was about forwarding to Mrs. Honvágy, when it occurred to me that if I delivered them myself I might, perhaps, give some useful advice as to their journey. No sooner had this idea suggested itself than I set off to seek my friend. Fortunately I found him at home, and we at once proceeded to Honvágy's house; where, though not previously acquainted with the family, I received a most hearty welcome. Mrs. Honvágy begged me with such winning kindness to spend the evening with them, that I could not possibly refuse the hospitable invitation. She introduced

me to her two grown up daughters, on whose careworn faces I remarked traces of recent tears. A boy about eight years old completed the family. He was soon quite at home with me, and after a variety of questions as to our sea-girt isle, he all at once looked full at me with his earnest, intelligent black eyes, and asked whether I thought the Danube was wide and deep enough to float a man-of-war; as he was determined to become an Admiral, and return with a fleet and army to rescue his fatherland.

"How happy children are in their innocent dreams!" exclaimed the mother, trying to smile, while the tears filled her eyes.

"I am not dreaming, mother," said the boy, in a half reproachful tone. "Have you forgotten what you yourself told me of Francis Rákóczi? How he returned at the head of a few hundred men, and in a year afterwards delivered our country from the power of the Austrians?"

Besides the Doctor's family, there were many ladies present, whose numbers were gradually increased by fresh arrivals. Amongst the latter I recognised several distinguished alike by birth and patriotism. They were all apparently old and tried friends of the hostess, who, notwithstanding that a gendarme was keeping watch at the gate, now came to prove that they were true to her in the

hour of adversity. All sought to offer consolation, but to no purpose; and at length themselves gave way to the depression and sadness which prevailed. It seemed as if they had assembled to take a last farewell at the dying bed of a friend inexpressibly dear to all, and the consciousness of this haunted them like a troubled dream. Sorrow was written upon every face, and reverberated in every sound that escaped their trembling lips. The conversation was at last carried on rather by looks than words, and those looks expressed an anguish so contagious at such moments, and so well understood by hearts moved alike by one idea, one feeling. They all knew that the sentence which had that day proscribed their friends might strike home to them to-morrow, and alike sever their most sacred ties.

The door again opened, and the Countess B. entered.

"Oh, how kind, how unselfish you are!" exclaimed the hostess, deeply touched on seeing her. "You come here to this marked house at the risk of being subjected to some ignominious treatment for having done so!"

"Do not fear for me," replied the Countess, with the tears of sympathy on her fair cheeks, now glowing with pride and courage. "Neither threats nor punishment shall ever prevent me

from fulfilling my duty. I am an Hungarian, and as such I will live and die, in spite of exile and dungeons."

The presence of this brave woman seemed to inspire every one with confidence. Their spirits rose, and the conversation gradually became more genial.

"Cheer up, dear friend," said the Countess to Mrs. Honvágy; "only think how many of our countrywomen, how I myself have had to suffer for our country's sake. God will support you, as he has supported many of us, and will lend strength to those who may yet have to endure a similar fate. Nay," she continued, in a sweet, persuasive tone, on remarking the tears chasing each other down the hostess's cheeks, "you must not let your courage sink just at the moment when you need it most. Remember the holy cause for which you suffer, and that a time will come, sooner perhaps than even we anticipate, when the noblest reward, the sight of our liberated fatherland, will compensate for all our trials! Suppose," said the Countess, turning round to the rest of the party, "we were to pass the evening with the recital of some of the patriotic traits of our countrywomen? I am sure each of us must know one or more worthy of mention."

The proposal met with general assent, and the

Countess commenced with the following episode from the life of one of her intimate friends:—

"In a northern county lives the Baroness M., universally esteemed for her many feminine virtues. Previous to the invasion of the Austrians, she had three sons. They were her pride and joy, and they well deserved to be so; for all the three were brave, chivalrous young men, passionately attached to their country; in a word, they were genuine Magyars. Before the outbreak of hostilities, the eldest of the brothers had retired from the Hungarian Noble Guard; the second managed the family estates, and the third, a priest, held a rich living. When the enemy had crossed the boundaries of the realm, the young men felt that the moment for action had arrived; they accordingly decided upon entering the ranks of the Honvéds, and communicated their resolution to their mother, who at once recognising the necessity of the step, sent them with her blessing to join the retreating army. The eldest M. was named sub-commander of a small fortress near the frontiers. The second remained about the person of Görgey, as ordnance officer, and the priest was appointed chaplain to the main army. The military career of all three was distinguished by instances of great bravery. Even the priest would not allow his brothers to surpass him. On several occasions he placed him-

self, cross in hand, at the head of the Honvéds, and by his example, like a second John Capistran, animated them to irresistible attacks. His day of glory, however, was gained at Kápolna, on the 27th of February, 1849. He there led a battalion amidst a most destructive fire of the enemy to a desperate assault upon the village. Having advanced to the middle of it, the battalion was surrounded by an overwhelming force, and the men taken prisoners. Yet undaunted by this disastrous turn in affairs, the chaplain, with the aid of his heavy silver cross, broke a path through the ranks of the assailants, and with a few followers made good his retreat to the Hungarian line.

"While our army was falling back behind the Theiss, the eldest M. kept at his post in the fortress, and for six weeks effectually defended the half decayed walls against a besieging corps. But the commander from the first moment, doubtful as to the issue of the contest, entered into a secret negotiation with the enemy, and opened the gates at discretion without the knowledge and consent of his sub-commander. The men were made prisoners of war, save M. and a few of his comrades, who, owing to their persevering resistance, were put in chains, like common felons, and thrown into the prison at Pressburg.

"The Baroness M. was no sooner acquainted with

the fate of her eldest son, than she hastened to Vienna to implore the mercy of the Emperor, and in consequence of her urgent solicitations, she at last obtained an assurance that his imprisonment should only be of short duration.

"In the meantime M. had to endure all the barbarities of an Austrian military inquisition. His judges made daily attempts to shake his fidelity to his country, both by offers of pardon and by withholding from him the common necessaries of life. Yet neither the one nor the other had any effect upon him. In the consciousness of having done his duty, he remained inflexible to the last, and, on being summoned to petition the Emperor for his life, he refused with indignation. During a confinement of five months, his spirits successfully resisted this ignoble treatment; but his frame, though vigorous, gradually succumbed to a lingering fever, and he felt the rapid approach of the moment when death would release him from the persecutions of his jailers. The latter, however, were aware of the precarious state of his health, and resolved at once to strike the final blow. One evening in June they accordingly passed sentence of death upon him, together with his comrade, Captain Gruber, and at early dawn on the following morning the two patriots were led through the deserted streets of the town to the Castle-hill, where they were suc-

cessively hung. Their heroic death was witnessed only by a detachment of Austrian soldiers and the rising sun, who upon his first rays bore their parting souls upwards to that better home, where there is no oppression and no vain struggle for what is just and right.

"The mother's long and anxious suspense and the sanguine hopes she had cherished, were all terminated by the terrible news of her son's execution, which reached her two days after it had taken place. To complete her misery, her daughter, now the only comfort of her deserted home, fell dangerously ill at the tidings. In the moment of anguish, with a heart almost broken under the weight of her sufferings, the high-minded woman not alone sought to console those around her, but likewise addressed the following letter to her surviving sons:—'Both I and the country have lost a beloved and devoted son. May God forgive his executioners! I know you will be deeply grieved at the news of his death, and still more so at the manner of it. But, whether on the battle-field or on the scaffold, he died the death of a patriot. Keep his example in mind, and remember that you have now to redouble your zeal, that the country may feel the loss of your brother less than I do.'"

As the Countess concluded, every eye lighted up, every cheek glowed and every bosom heaved

with excitement; her suggestion had worked a most favourable revolution on the spirits of her fair auditors. It was evident that enthusiasm was taking the place of despondency, and that those who but a few moments previously had felt so dejected and powerless, would now have joyfully braved any hardship, nay, even death for their beloved country. Under the influence of this enthusiasm, the Baroness O. related the succeeding narrative :—

"In the hut we meet with as much devoted love of country as in the castle, but with more misery; inasmuch as in the former material are added to moral sufferings. In a small cottage of a populous town, on the right bank of the Danube, dwells an elderly widow, surrounded by five orphan children. Grief, ill health and want have left ineffaceable traces on her furrowed cheeks; so much so, that at first sight it is difficult to believe that so firm and lofty a spirit animates her feeble frame. This poor woman was the wife of General S., who, after a service of thirty-five years in the Austrian army, having, at the command of the king taken the oath of allegiance to the Hungarian Constitution, in his simple but incorrupted mind thought it preferable to remain faithful and to die, than to save his existence at the price of perjury. Thus he made one of the unfortunate thirteen who

were immolated at Arad. A former comrade of S., moved by his widow's needy circumstances, without her knowledge interceded for her at court; and the young Emperor, after the true fashion of tyrants, having injured her irreparably, graciously consented to cover the wounds with a plaster of a few Austrian bank notes. The governor of the town hastened to communicate the joyous tidings to the widow. She heard the announcement with anything but pleasure, and, after a short reflection, replied: 'Though necessity urges me to take advantage of the Emperor's offer, still my conscience forbids my doing so. I feel that I should disgrace my husband's memory and the misfortunes of my fatherland were I to accept the price of blood to provide for my daily bread. If it is the will of Providence that I and my children should perish, His will be done; we shall but share their father's fate.'

"Her righteous refusal brought its just reward. The angel of mercy gathered the words as they fell from her lips, and disseminated them through the length and breadth of the land, and whenever they reached the ears of other patriotic women, they lost no time in bringing material aid to the dwelling of the widow, and affording her that consolation which woman's sympathy alone can effectively administer."

This narrative ended, a girl of striking beauty blushingly asked permission to tell her story, which on being granted she began :—

"I have a friend living on the banks of the Theiss, to whom I not long since paid a visit. She is the daughter of a nobleman of the name of B., formerly rich in estates and honours; since the close of the war, however, rich but in suffering and the esteem of his country. B. acted during the war as Government Commissioner, and, when all was over, with difficulty saved his life by the sacrifice of his extensive property. While his son, a distinguished Honvéd officer, was sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment, B., with stoical equanimity, exchanged his castle for a hut, and aided by his daughter, Johánka, undertook the cultivation of a few acres, the remnant of his ruined fortunes. Notwithstanding his reduced circumstances, B. can still call himself rich in the possession of such a daughter. During the vicissitudes of the war she gave many proofs of her strength of mind, her devotion to her father, and, above all, her transcendent patriotism. Her beauty and attainments were not less striking than her superior character, and she still retains the reputation of being the fairest of the many fair ones in her county. Amongst her numerous suitors was an Austrian cavalry officer, high in rank and of great

wealth, who, previous to the political troubles, had often enjoyed B.'s splendid hospitality, and now, being quartered with his regiment in the vicinity of his present abode, renewed his acquaintance with the family. It was soon apparent that Johánka's charms had entirely captivated the officer's heart, and of this he at length gave unmistakeable evidence by proposing formally for her hand. He promised to promote her happiness in every way, to procure her brother's freedom, to reinstate her father in his former possessions; in short, not a wish of hers should be left ungratified. 'I thank you for your good intentions,' rejoined the brave girl, with heaving breast and flashing eyes. 'I see you have the will and the power to redress some of the wrongs perpetrated on my family; yet there still remains an obstacle, which, in spite of all your endeavours, you never can remove, and that is the consciousness that I am the daughter of that country against which you have borne arms, and which you still aid in oppressing!'

"This signal defeat at the hand of a girl deeply pained the haughty officer; so much the more as he was compelled to own to himself that, whilst there existed such patriotic women, Hungary could not be looked upon as conquered."

After the courageous refusal of the noble Johánka had been discussed and applauded at full

length, an elderly lady offered to take her turn; and though her tale, she said, would pain her feelings as a mother, yet, on the other hand, it would gladden her patriotic pride, as it proved how far the female sex are capable of devotion to their fatherland.

"There is scarcely one amongst you with whom the name of the Baroness J. is not familiar. She is a woman gifted alike with high intellectual and moral qualities. The close of the war found her a widow; her husband, one of the most enlightened and energetic supporters of our country's cause, having perished on the scaffold which was at that time ascended by so many noble men, that since then, at least in our country, it is no longer looked upon as the brand of infamy, but as the reward of patriotism. The Baroness J. had a son, who, during the struggle at home was, as an Austrian officer, aiding to expel liberty from Italy. His mother was not a little grieved to see him pursuing so culpable a course; yet his youth and inexperience, and still more his remoteness from his fatherland, afforded at least a seeming excuse for such conduct. The noise of battle on the banks of the Danube and Theiss was followed by wholesale executions and the mute, heartrending mourning of the nation. It was at this period that the young J. obtained leave of absence to visit his

family. The news of his coming brought comfort to the mother, who hoped that his views were altered, and that he would still share her tears and become the confidant of her sad and dear remembrances.

"On a gloomy and dull November day a carriage drove into the court yard of her castle, and from it a man alighted in the uniform of an Austrian officer. Such visits for the sake of domiciliary search were then of almost daily occurrence, so that the Baroness thought but little of the new arrival, when, to her painful surprise, she recognised her own son in the wearer of the detested uniform. 'Is it possible,' she exclaimed, in accents of distress, 'that you can still wear the livery of those who murdered your noble father and despoiled the country of its inalienable rights? Do you not feel that your white coat stands as a hideous spectre between you and your fatherland, between you and your mother?' The son looked rather confused, then touched by his mother's appeal, and on her imploring him to leave the Austrian service, he replied evasively and asked for a month's reflection. During this time he was constantly absent from home visiting the officers in the neighbouring garrison, and at the close of the stipulated period for consideration he acquainted the Baroness with his resolution to return to his regiment. He spoke of

his military honour and duty, and gave her to understand that Hungary had received but due chastisement for her disloyal proceedings. The poor mother listened for awhile to this declaration in speechless horror and amazement. The more she gazed upon him, the more he seemed to grow into the likeness of the executioner of her husband and of his father. At length she could no longer bear his presence. Maddened at the declaration of such opinions and feelings on the part of her husband's son, patriotic wrath subdued in her bosom the instinct of maternal love, and she pronounced upon her degenerate child the most awful of curses —the curse of a mother!"

"That was truly a Spartan trait," said my friend as the speaker ceased, "and well worthy of record in the annals of our country. As we are now *en train*, the ladies will perhaps allow me to take my turn with an incident from the life of a young woman in humble life, who was influenced by the same lofty enthusiasm, though called forth under other circumstances and with a different result." Permission was granted, and my friend continued. "One of the mountain passes leading from eastern Hungary into Transylvania winds through the picturesque and romantic valley of the Maros river. The pass is in one place defended by the fortress of Déva, which, though small, still on account of its

inaccessible site upon a high steep rock on the left bank of the Maros, is one of great strength and importance. Towards the close of the war Déva belonged to us, and was garrisoned by one officer, two sub-officers, and forty-seven privates, most of them young Székler recruits.

"After General Bem had been driven by the Russians from Transylvania, the entire country fell into their power, save a part of Székler-land and the castle of Déva. The latter, after a fruitless summons to surrender, was invested by the enemy. The siege, or rather blockade had lasted about a fortnight, when Görgey's treacherous surrender at Világos ensued. The besiegers lost no time in acquainting the garrison with this terrible event, warning them at the same time not to aggravate their fate by a further useless resistance. The communication, though at first considered in the fortress as a snare, soon turned out to be but too true, as the report was confirmed by the arrivals from the disbanded armies. The commander of Déva with whose name I am, to my regret, unacquainted, was one of those rare characters who do not reckon their life by days but by deeds, and whose courage, keeping pace with the increasing danger, excites them, amidst the general despondency, to mark their retirement from the stage of action by some memorable achievement. Seeing

the fruitlessness of a protracted defence the commander informed his men of their desperate situation. He spoke to them as Leonidas must have spoken to his three hundred Greeks at Thermopylæ, and at length wrought the enthusiasm of his young soldiers to such a height, that death seemed to them preferable to submission. One and all solemnly swore to perish in the fortress, the only spot that in the whole of their fatherland could yet be called free. Déva being provided with a large store of gunpowder, it was after a short debate decided that they should blow themselves up together with their trust. In order, however, that the manner of their death might come to the knowledge of their relatives, one of their comrades was to be sent off to their mountain homes before the decisive moment took place. Though each of them had either parents or friends, or some being even yet more dear, nevertheless, not one would accept the offer of life and separate from his companions; so that the commander was obliged to decide by lot who was to be the bearer of the fatal message.

"Besides the men there was also the wife of a sub-officer in the fortress, who, it had been arranged, was to accompany the messenger home. But the brave woman, instead of taking advantage of that opportunity to save her life, announced her determination, at all events to share her husband's

fate, and, urged on by patriotic inspiration, implored for permission to set fire herself to the gunpowder; as the Hungarian heroine had done three centuries before in the castle of Vég-Veszély, when, seeing the place stormed by the Turks, she threw the lighted torch into the powder magazine and blew herself up together with hundreds of the savage foemen. Such romantic heroism in a woman filled the men even on the brink of destruction with unbounded admiration, and the commander, at their unanimous desire, granted the extraordinary request.

"On the evening of the 18th of August, 1849, after the last solemn farewell had been taken and the messenger let down from the walls by means of a rope, all at once an immense column of fire and smoke rose from the rocky projection, accompanied by a terrible explosion, which shook the neighbourhood for miles around. In another moment the small town at the foot of the castle rock was covered with the falling ruins of the fortress, which had disappeared from its lofty position.

"The deed was done. The fifty Széklers had sealed their fidelity to their fatherland with their lives; but the crown belongs to the woman who with superhuman courage lighted the fiery train which hurried those heroic spirits into eternity."

No sooner was this stirring episode of Dóva at an end, than another of the ladies began:—

"In the long list of talented poets, who in later times made themselves conspicuous on the Hungarian Parnassus, was one whose productions, from their patriotic tendency, became great favourites with the people. The name of this bard is Sárosy. His genius, however, was encased in a frail shrine. He could bear no exertion and had constantly to struggle against attacks of ill health. Shortly before the country was officially pronounced to be in danger, Sárosy married. The young wife was as much attached to her land as to her husband and, seeing all their neighbours take up arms and hasten to the defence of their hearths, pressed him so earnestly to do the same, that Sárosy in a moment of enthusiasm, forgetting the precarious state of his health, expressed himself willing to change the lyre for the sword and join a troop of volunteers. In order, however, that in the camp he might not be deprived of the attention so indispensable for him, his wife resolved to accompany her husband, and at his side faithfully share all the hardships and dangers of the campaign. Strange to say, the novelty and excitement of a soldier's life wrought favourably upon Sárosy's constitution. His wife, known amongst the corps as 'The little Amazon,' remained near him during every fray, in which he took an active part. When the day's fight was over and the sword sheathed, the Honvéds

gathered round the popular bard, and Sárosy sung to them of their own brave exploits. Truly, poetry was never put to a nobler and more practical use than in those times of peril and glory, of turmoil and repose. Thus spring passed with its honey months of victory; then came summer, bringing in lieu of flowers only devastating storms. Towards the end of July, the Hungarians had a sanguinary encounter with the Russians near Debreczen. It cost the former a considerable number of their best men, amongst whom was Sárosy himself. When pierced through the breast his wife, as she staunched his gushing blood, exclaimed to the bystanding Honvéds, whom the dying poet had so often inspired with his songs: 'He has now written his last, his finest poem with his heart's blood; the concluding strain of it is,' she added, while gazing on his closing eyes, 'It is sweet and great to die for the fatherland!'"

While the animation of the party was at its height, I stole away to avoid being present at the parting scene, which I saw could not long be delayed, as the clock already pointed to midnight. On returning home, I found a gendarme in my room who handed me a paper, and at the same time asked for a reply. Notwithstanding that such occurrences were the order of the day, I felt unpleasantly surprised at the contents of the official

document, which was nothing less than an order to leave the town in twenty-four, and the country in forty-eight hours. Having taken a calm view of this stern mandate, I came to the conclusion that I might congratulate myself at the ire of the Government falling so lightly upon me; for more than one of my countrymen had been arrested merely for speaking their native tongue, which in the ears of the Austrians has such a revolutionary intonation. I had likewise long intended to revisit England; and though my departure was inconveniently abrupt, I rejoiced that I was able to join the Honvágy family on their journey westwards. So I at once packed up, and at break of day informed them of the sudden turn in my affairs.

A few hours later the train bore us rapidly away, and hills and dales, towns and villages, then the very land of the Magyars, vanished from our sight; till we saw the ominous black and yellow of Austria changed into the mournful black and white of Prussia. When the fair land of that gallant but fettered nation lay far behind us, I looked at my exiled fellow travellers, who were silently weeping in a corner of the carriage, and thought, "How much that is dear to them they had been compelled to leave: why could they not also have left the memory of their misfortune behind?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HUNGARIAN SEA.

The lower ranges of mountains and hills, which cover about one half of the Magyar land, contain innumerable charming spots, affording to the contemplative as well as to the business-wearied mind ever new enjoyment. Few of these places, excelling in pastoral beauty, possess more attractions, and none is more accessible to the tourist, than the Lake of Balaton with its fairy-like environs. Along the northern bank of that magnificent lake in particular nature has displayed all her soft and glorious beauties, which at once fascinate the eye and lull the spirit in a sweet waking dream, calling forth even from the lips of the *ennuyé* a smile of real pleasure; an exclamation of unfeigned admiration. This is, besides, the classical ground of Hungarian poetry, immortalised with all its historical and traditional lore by Kisfaludy Sándor, the greatest Hungarian lyrical writer, who there, during a sojourn of several years, composed his beautiful and popular poems.

The Balaton or, as people there call it "the Hungarian Sea," is the largest piece of standing water in that country. It lies on the right bank of the Danube, eighty miles south of Buda-Pesth, between the counties of *Zala*, *Vesprém* and *Somogy*; extending from the north-east in a north-westerly direction. It is about forty-three miles in length; its breadth varies from nine miles to half a mile, and its depth from sixteen to twenty yards. Besides its own springs, it is supplied by forty-one brooks and rivers; whilst it discharges itself only into the Sió River. The shores are formed by several ranges of the Bakony Forest, gently sloping towards the water, or terminating abruptly in steep isolated hills and promontories. A part of the southern shore is level and overgrown with reeds, rushes and sedge, which supply the people with thatching, mats, firing and other articles of domestic use.

The banks of the Balaton are dotted with towns and villages, their number amounting to about fifty. The inhabitants, all genuine Magyars, carry on a brisk trade amongst themselves, by means of their large and flat-bottomed sailing and rowing boats.

In clear weather the water from a distance appears of a bluish colour, which, on a nearer approach, changes to grey. When the lake is quite calm, many dark patches of a round and serpen-

tine form may be distinguished from elevated points upon its surface, which remain stationary throughout the year. The people call them *Hevesek*, "hot spots;" they are, in fact, warm springs, issuing from the bottom of the lake, which freeze over only during the severest part of the winter, at which time the lake is so thickly covered with ice, that heavy sledges and carts pass from one shore to the other without the slightest risk. As regards the hot spots, all of them being well known to the drivers, they are easily avoided; or, if the fissures be small, taken at a leap by the docile horses.

The Balaton possesses the peculiarity of its waters becoming suddenly agitated in calm weather, without any apparent cause, as if acted upon by some subterranean power. This phenomenon, as yet not fully understood, usually begins on the southern shore. The darkened surface is all at once violently disturbed; mighty waves rise and dash over each other, and the wild turmoil extends with great rapidity, especially in a northern direction, breaking on the opposite shore with tremendous force. Woe betide the boat which is surprised by that "play of the lake!" The boatmen tell many a sad story of the accidents which occur at such times, not unfrequently attended with loss of life; for, notwithstanding long experience, they

cannot guard against the approach of this danger, as there are no signs to forewarn them. In a couple of hours the roaring of the waves ceases, and the lake again becomes as calm as the sunny day, which is reflected in its quieted expanse. At the time of full moon this phenomenon is observed most frequently.

The lake abounds in fish of various kinds, of which the *Fogas*, a large fish of prey, of a peculiar structure, is the most esteemed for its whiteness and delicate flavour. Many hundred weight of them are yearly sent all over the country, and likewise exported to Vienna.

Occasionally petrifactions, resembling claws and hoofs, are washed on shore. Tradition ascribes them to vast herds of cattle taken from the inhabitants by the enemy, which were afterwards driven by a violent storm into the lake and drowned. On careful examination these petrifactions were found to be shells of various shapes, left from time immemorial on the neighbouring mountains by the receding sea, from whence they are washed by the rain into the lake. During their peregrinations, and continual contact with pebbles and stones, they assume the forms above mentioned,

The attractions of the Balaton are greatly enhanced by the baths of Füred, situated in the midst of that delightful country upon the northern

shore of the lake. Owing to this circumstance as well as to its mineral springs, it has become the most fashionable watering-place in Hungary. Long before the season begins, people from far and near flock thither to refresh both mind and body. For the accommodation of visitors from the capital, who travel without their carriages, several omnibuses leave Buda-Pesth every morning, either direct for the baths, or for the village of Kenese, the nearest point to the lake. There the steamer, which for the last eight years has regularly plied upon it, and is called *Kisfaludy* in honour of the bard of that name, awaits the arrival of the visitors and starts towards sunset for Füred, the centre of pleasure and fashion.

As we proceed along the shore, skirted by villages, farms and vine-clad hills, their summits still tinted by the flush of parting day, and so attractive in their tranquil beauty, we catch a few glimpses of the country, which, beyond the baths, first displays all its graces. The lake side of Füred gradually grows more distinct. The large white-washed buildings in front, several stories high, one of them the Horváth Hotel, containing 105 rooms, conveys a favourable impression of the place, which does not diminish, when, on wandering through its streets, we discover a neatly-built town clustered in one of the most lovely nooks of the lake, con-

taining a theatre, church, hospital, several handsome hotels and private mansions, and an extensive English park for public use.

Before reaching the landing-place, our ear is greeted by the sounds of merry music, wafted over the waters on the balmy evening breeze. The tones come from the hall of the great hotel near the shore, where the guests, who prefer the ball-room to the theatre, amuse themselves every evening with music and dance.

The landing-place is thronged with porters and visitors, the latter hailing in sonorous language their approaching friends from afar. At such times it is no easy matter to find comfortable lodgings, the place being overcrowded with guests, amongst whom are the first men in Hungary, both as regards birth and literary or artistic reputation. They may be met with at the *table-d'hôte*, in the theatre, the ball-room or on the promenades, where intercourse is influenced neither by difference in social position, nor by any untimely display of etiquette.

The mineral waters of Füred are of a chalybeate nature, and impregnated with carbonic acid gas of about 50° of Fahrenheit in temperature, and alike agreeable for drinking as healthy for bathing. The water issues from three springs, and the quantity they yield is so great, that two of them are

amply sufficient for all purposes. The one at the western end of the promenade serves for drinking and supplies the trade; whilst the second, the most abundant, is conducted by pipes to the bath-houses, and, when heated, used for bathing. Besides the accommodations for mineral baths, there are also buildings along the shore affording the means of bathing in the lake. The effect of both kinds of baths, for which poor people pay only three half-pence, is in peculiar cases very beneficial; and the number of yearly visitors amounts to several thousands.

From the early history of this place we learn, that it was known to the Romans and that Valeria, one of their empresses, recovered from a severe illness by the use of its waters; in remembrance of which she raised a temple at her country seat in Tihany, to the worship of Diana. During succeeding centuries the baths were frequented only by people from the vicinity, until the middle of the eighteenth century, when a Benedictine abbot of Tihany had one of the wells inclosed and a house built near it. From that time the celebrity of Füred commenced. Every year brought thither hundreds of invalids, and new buildings were constantly erected. Even a fearful storm and more recently a fire, which successively destroyed it, only checked its prosperity for a while. The place was rebuilt

with additional splendour, and its daily increase shows the estimation in which it is held by the public.

The mineral waters of Füred are not the only ones to be met with near the Balaton. The visitor during his rambles among the mountains, will often fall in with similar springs, as salutary and palatable as those of Füred, which nevertheless flow uncared for, except perhaps by some herdsman or woodcutter.

At the bath parties are made up to visit the lake and its environs; the peninsula of Tihany, as the nearest point, being generally selected for the first trip. It may be reached either by land or water. We will choose the latter, and for that purpose engage a rowing and sailing boat, several of which lie ready in the port.

After crossing the bay that incloses Tihany on one side, we land in about an hour at the foot of the steep, craggy lava cliff, which here in several places rises almost perpendicularly four hundred feet above the level of the lake, and, projecting for a mile into the Balaton, forms the oval peninsula of Tihany. Here as well as in other places in the neighbouring mountains, the volcanic formation of the country is clearly to be traced; of which also the many isolated hills with their varied and fantastic shapes, bear witness, having apparently been

thrown up or torn from the range of mountains by some violent volcanic action.

Our fatiguing ascent up the steep rocky path is richly rewarded at every step. The higher we advance, the more extended the horizon becomes, and we willingly refrain from casting more than a hasty glance around before reaching the summit, in order not to lessen the impression of the glories awaiting us there. At length we gain the top of the Stake-hill, the highest point on the peninsula. There one of the noblest views which fancy can conceive bursts upon the sight. At our feet, far to the east and west, lies the majestic Balaton with its many bays, curves and promontories, glistening like a huge mirror in its gigantic emerald frame of hills and mountains, clad in radiant verdure and speckled to their summits with countless villas and farms—the very types of rural plenty and content —their white walls shining forth like so many gems from their vine and fruit gardens. The chain of mountains is often intersected by deep ravines, which widen towards the lake into luxuriant valleys. Here and there the conical peaks, soaring above the surrounding country, or peeping through the openings of the valleys, bear the ruins of mighty castles and abbeys. The varied colouring of the landscape from the sombre grey of the rocks to the golden hue of the corn-fields, from the delicate

shades of the birch-trees to the dark and solemn green of the firs, add a marvellous effect to this enchanting scene, the distant horizon of which is bounded by loftier mountain ridges, their dark contours rising sharp against the bright blue sky.

On looking towards the peninsula, the interior of which is formed like the crater of a volcano, we discover the ancient Abbey and Church of the Benedictines, who, like their brother monks in other countries, displayed exquisite taste in the choice of sites for their abodes. This fine building stands upon an elevation in front of the peninsula, commanding a view from its windows as superb as that from the Stake-hill. The Abbey was founded in 1055, and endowed with rich estates at different epochs in the middle ages by the kings of Hungary. Since that period, especially during the rule of the Turks, it was often used as a fortress and must have been valiantly defended, as it successfully withstood the repeated attacks of the enemy. The peninsula was then separated from the land, on the northern side, by a deep water ditch, traces of which are still visible.

The visitor will do well to call upon the abbot, who welcomes friend or stranger with genuine Hungarian hospitality. You will at once be shown the library with its valuable manuscripts, the col-

lection of minerals and other curiosities, amongst which the chapel beneath the principal altar deserves the first place from its antiquity, eight centuries having passed since it was built. It rests upon four massive gothic columns, and contains pictures in *fresco* of the same remote age. Behind the north-western side of the church is a remarkable echo, which distinctly repeats a strain of music or a long sentence. This echo is limited to a space of some yards, beyond which it entirely ceases. On the peninsula, at the foot of the Abbey-hill, is the town of Tihany. The inhabitants gain their living by the produce of their vine and fruit-gardens. There are also two little lakes, one of them remarkable from being the exact shape of the Balaton in miniature, as if reflected in a convex glass. On a third hill, west of the Abbey, stands a Roman watch-tower. It clings to its beautiful birth-place with an astonishing tenacity, having struggled for nearly two thousand years against time and adverse fortune, without losing much of its solid framework in the contest. Several hermits' cells and a small oratory, hewn in the rock facing the lake, are shown to the stranger by the peasant children, who act as *cicerones*, and offer petrified shells for sale. The cells hang about two hundred feet above the water and centuries ago were the dwellings of nuns.

At Tihany the Balaton is narrowest, its breadth being little more than half a mile. The celebrated Baron Nicholas Vesselényi once swam across it at that point.

Every Sunday the steamer makes a trip from Füred to Keszthely, the farthest western extremity of the lake, to afford the visitors an opportunity of enjoying a panoramic view of either shore from the water. The boat starts in the morning, and, as may be imagined, the deck is crowded on such occasions with many a gay and joyous group.

As we have already stated, the real marvels of the Balaton commence from Füred. After having doubled the promontory of Tihany, we are suddenly introduced into the sanctuary of the lake. The day is serene and sunny, a true holiday, which lends a radiant colouring to the scene around. The lake before us extends far beyond our sight, its slightly ruffled surface looking as though every wave were set in burnished silver. The chain of lofty hills as well as their isolated projections that skirt the banks, are adorned with castle ruins, pretty villas, patches of forest and vineyards and extensive pasturages, on which herds of cattle graze. From time to time a valley opens upon the lake, sheltering in its richly cultivated bosom a farm or hamlet, smiling in plenty and sending forth its rivulet as a tribute to the lake. Now and

then we see a boat starting from the shore, filled with visitors or peasants in festive attire, bound on a visit to some friends on the opposite shore, who greet us with a loud "Eljen!" as they pass. On the shore village rises upon village, their white cottages and pointed church spires peeping invitingly from amongst the shady trees and fruit gardens, and glassing themselves with seeming self-content in the smooth expanse of the lake. Along the roads and paths motley groups of peasants in their Sunday garb are to be seen, some conversing, others walking leisurely towards the neighbouring parish church.

As we glide quickly on the scene is constantly varied with charming transient views, every fresh one increasing our delight and admiration. Thus we approach the highest and the noblest point of the lake, the stately Badacson mountain, not less renowned for its natural attractions, than for the golden grapes growing upon its rugged declivities, which are considered the choicest in this famous vine district.

As most of the noblemen and wealthy proprietors of the neighbouring counties possess their vineyards at Badacson, the vintage there is yearly celebrated with great festivities. In the months of October and November the villas scattered over the mountain resound with music, song and

merry-making. The mountain itself projects far into the lake, forming two lovely bays, whose spacious amphitheatres unfold magnificent panoramas, as they recede in a semicircular shape. In the eastern bay groups of lofty trees, meadows, vine-hills and rocky steeps alternate with each other; behind which rise several conical summits, the one forming the centre being crowned with the ruins of an ancient abbey. The western bay is still more grand, its background being adorned by two isolated rocky peaks, one bearing the remains of the castle of Szigliget, and the other those of Szent-György; whilst high above all towers the Badacson mountain, its base surrounded by several villages, and its lofty summit encircled by a belt of forest and a superb basaltic colonnade.

On leaving the landing-place of Badacson, the Sabbath-bells commence pealing for morning service. The country around soon takes up the harmonious sounds, every spire contributing its part towards the solemn call to prayer. The bells continue ringing and calling during the remainder of our journey, which terminates at Keszthely, where we arrive about noon. It is worthy of remark, that in this town the first public institution in Hungary for agricultural information was established in 1801, by the patriotic Count George Festetich. The institution has a museum, with col-

lections of minerals, models, &c., a large botanical garden and a well-ordered model farm of seven hundred acres. Lectures are delivered by four professors and several teachers. The course lasts two years, and the institution sends forth yearly some fifty young men to propagate the blessings of agricultural knowledge throughout the country. Near Keszthely there is a bridge across the lake 1200 yards in length.

From this town pedestrian excursions are undertaken to the romantic castle ruins in the vicinity of the Balaton, of which there are more than thirty. We confine ourselves to a glance at one or two of the most celebrated.

Two of Kisfaludy's admirable ballads have invested the castles of Rezi and Tátika with unfading interest, at least for every Hungarian. They stand near to each other on two summits of the Bakony mountains, north from Keszthely, and a two hours' drive from this place. Both command a splendid view of the Bakony Forest, with its venerable oaks and beech trees, the summits of which rise two thousand feet above the level of the sea. These, as well as other castles in that mountainous district, date from the middle of the thirteenth century, when, in the time of King Bela IV., on the inroad of the Moguls, the nobles from the steppes fled for safety to the inaccessible recesses of the

Bakony, and there built their strongholds. Rezi and Tátika were partly destroyed during the insurrection of Rákóczi, about the year 1705, and are now picturesque ruins, in the possession of Count Festetich.

The largest as well as the best preserved of the castles is that of Sümegh, situated a few miles further north. Its towers and battlements look almost as proud and stately, from their rocky height, as they did when built by King Bela IV. The town, at the foot of the Castle-rock, is celebrated from having been for several years the residence of Kisfaludy Sándor, who there wrote the greater part of his poems.

Returning towards Badacson in an easterly direction, we distinguish at a distance some grey ruins upon a high, almost inaccessible rock, their barren and decaying aspect affording a striking contrast to the verdant, undulating land, and the busy life around. These are the ruins of the castle of Csobáncz, likewise immortalised in song by Kisfaludy. Its last possessor, the patriotic Gyulafi, fought by the side of Rákóczi for the independence of their fatherland, and afterwards shared his leader's fate in exile.

With reference to the part which the Balaton and its environs have played in the history of the country in modern times, we will quote, as an ex-

ample, one of the episodes from the war of independence during the year 1848. This episode occurred upon its waters, when the Archduke Stephen, late Palatine of Hungary, after the invasion of the Croats, appointed Jelachich to meet him upon the lake, in the steamer, in order to come to an amicable arrangement. The Archduke, accompanied by several ministers, embarked on the 25th of September, and approached the southern shore near Siófok, where Jelachich was standing, surrounded by a brilliant suite. In vain the Hungarians sent a boat for the Croat chief; instead of hastening to grasp the hand offered in peace and friendship, he asked the advice of his officers, who, of course, dissuaded him from so hazardous an undertaking as that of coming in contact with a few Hungarian nobles, amongst whom was the nephew of his own Emperor. After having waited an hour, the Archduke returned to the Hungarian army, and the Ban continued his hostile proceedings.

We should consider our task but half fulfilled, were we to abstain from adding, at least, one of the traditions attached to the castle ruins, which, passing from lip to lip, are faithfully preserved by the people, like so many time-honoured relics. We will select from our abundant store that which is the most likely to have an historical foundation,

from having been traced amongst ancient family papers in the archives of the Benedictine Abbey of Tihany. The tradition relates to the origin of the Castle of Nagy-Vásony, which rises above the town of the same name, a two-hours' drive from the northern shore of the lake.

Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, at the time when the great Matthias Corvinus adorned the Hungarian throne, and the spirit of true chivalry had not yet become entirely extinct, the widow of a noble dwelt in Szent-Mihály, near the mountain where the remains of the once strong fortress of Nagy-Vásony now stand. This widow had a daughter named Margit, on whom nature had not only lavished an uncommon share of beauty, but also a marvellous talent for music, which having been cultivated by a relation, a Benedictine monk from the Abbey of Tihany, her voice acquired such sweetness and flexibility, that, as the chronicler states, even the birds were attracted by it.

From the little intercourse Margit had with the world, it seemed likely that she would fade away in the solitude of the forest, unseen and unknown; but the very contrary happened. For as the breeze wafts the fragrance of the flowers far from the spot where they bloom; so the fame of the "Nightingale of Szent-Mihály" spread for miles

beyond the limited sphere of her simple and eventless life.

No sooner had the knowledge of the girl's charms got abroad, than numerous visitors, most of them wealthy cavaliers, hastened even from distant counties to offer her not merely the tribute of their admiration, but also themselves and their fortune. Although most welcome to the ambitious mother, this lordly train of admirers met with little encouragement on the part of the daughter, whose heart was as yet untouched by any of the commonplace tales of love she was compelled to listen to from them. The mother's urgent entreaties that she should at once make a choice, greatly perplexed the poor girl. In this emergency, the appearance of the learned Benedictine monk was hailed by her with undisguised pleasure, and the secret of her difficult position forthwith confidentially imparted to him, whereupon the monk gave her the following advice: "Tell your suitors," my daughter, "that, as a selection amongst so many noble cavaliers is no easy task for an inexperienced girl, you wish to put the strength of their attachment to a trial, which will decide who is the most devoted. For that purpose, you desire that a castle shall be built on the mountain of Nagy-Vásony, within the term of a year and a day; and the *cavalier* who at the expiration of that period

lays the *last stone* on the building shall be the lawful claimant to your hand." Though not entirely satisfied with the monk's counsel, lest she might in the end have to marry one whom she perhaps liked least of all, still, in default of a better, Margit gave her consent and informed the cavaliers of her resolve. Notwithstanding its severity the condition was accepted by many of them, and they determined to commence building without loss of time. The necessary workmen were procured, and the walls rose rapidly under the superintendence of the devoted lovers. But, before six months elapsed, their numbers had considerably decreased; and towards the end of the appointed time only three remained faithful to their decision. During this period of agitating suspense, Margit gradually lost her cheerful spirits.

One evening, as she sat leaning on her silent harp in melancholy reveries, her ears caught the plaintive tones of a shalm, which, from harmonising so well with her sad feelings, seemed to her like the consoling voice of a friend.

"Who can the player be?" she asked herself, as the sound ceased. In vain she looked from the window, whence she could only see the stars twinkling cheeringly upon her, and the trees that, with their shadows, hid every distant object from her sight. She longed to hear the shalm again,

and the next evening her secret wish was realised. As she listened in rapt delight, her fingers unconsciously glided over the chords of her harp, and she played and sang, inspired by a feeling hitherto unknown to her. Between every pause the shalm echoed the last strain of her song, till, on a sudden, a tall, manly form stood before her window. Though at first frightened by so unexpected an apparition, the girl soon felt reassured on being addressed by the friendly voice of the stranger, who announced himself as the echo of her song; the bard of his undying love for the "Nightingale of Szent-Mihály." This avowal he made in such persuasive language, that, yielding to his passionate entreaties and the inspiration of her own heart, she granted him permission to repeat his serenade. In a word, the shalm-player's simple melodies had touched the tenderest chord in the girl's breast, and accomplished that which all the splendour of her other suitors had failed to effect. The knight, for such the shalm-player was, having thus secured the maiden's affections, had now to outwit the cavaliers in laying the last stone, without which his first success would be of little avail.

The next day, the number of the workmen at the castle was increased by a man of lofty stature and muscular frame, who got through the heaviest work with astonishing ease and dexterity. The

men, glad of such an able comrade, asked neither who he was nor whence he came.

Meanwhile the building rapidly approached its termination; and, when the appointed time arrived, a goodly castle soared against the sky from its rocky summit, complete in all its parts, save a gap left to be filled up at the decisive moment.

As the herald mounted the scaffold to announce the close of the work, the excitement of the three knights reached its height. While each endeavoured to outwit the other, either by persuading him to lay his stone before the time, or else altogether to prevent him from doing so, they, in breathless anxiety, surrounded the spot where their fate would so soon be decided. But vain were the efforts of each to throw the others off their guard. Each watched his neighbour so jealously, that, ere the last words had left the herald's lips, they simultaneously thrust their stones on the wall. Now it so happened that a vacancy still remained, which, a moment later, during the uproar of the final scene, was filled up unobserved by the mysterious workman.

The time of ordeal was over, and the cavaliers descended the scaffold with heavy hearts and empty purses, since all the three were secretly convinced, that neither could exclusively lay claim to the ardently coveted prize.

In spite of the hopelessness of their cause, the cavaliers presented themselves before Margit, each claiming her hand as the reward of his fidelity and toil. But the girl already knew who was the victor; and now, with overflowing gratitude, acknowledged, that by following the monk's advice in throwing the apple of discord amongst them, she had most effectually escaped their dreaded suit.

At length, the discomfited cavaliers decided on submitting their case to King Matthias, by whose impartial decision they promised to abide. They accordingly repaired to Buda, where Matthias was then holding his court. They were still eagerly pleading their respective claims, when a warrior of noble appearance, clad in the armour of the "Black Legion," stepped before the king

"Welcome, my brave Kinizsi Pál,"* said the

* Kinizsi Pál, a renowned Hungarian hero, was one of the ablest military leaders of Matthias Corvinus, who, with his wonted sagacity, selected him from amongst the people. On one occasion, when travelling in the country, the king came to a mill, where he saw a youth carrying two millstones, one in each hand. Surprised by this display of herculean strength, Matthias asked him a few questions, to which he replied with so much spirit, that the king immediately proposed that he should enter his Black Legion. "I will," replied the stalwart lad, "but on condition that I may be allowed to fight with two swords." This youth was Kinizsi. The king was not deceived in him; Kinizsi distinguished himself by indomitable

sovereign to the commander of his favourite troop, "what news bring you from the camp?"

But Kinizsi, the terror of the Turks, had now, perhaps for the first time in his life, no warlike tale to tell. In its stead, he related that during a visit at a friend's in the Bakony forest, having heard of the "Nightingale of Szent-Mihály," he repaired to that place, when the girl's loveliness made such a mighty impression upon his, till then, invincible heart, that he resolved to break a lance for her. Circumstances favoured him, as we have seen, not alone in gaining Margit's affections, but also in laying the last stone on the castle.

Matthias was not a little pleased at finding the stern warrior was still accessible to tender impressions; and, after convincing himself of the justness of his cause, he adjudged to him the maiden and the castle, presenting the bride at the same time with all the lands she could overlook from the watch-tower of Nagy-Vásony, a very handsome dowry, as the castle commands a country of many miles in extent.

The workmen who had been engaged in erecting the building settled themselves beneath its walls, where a few huts already existed. The town,

prowess and great military genius, and at last became the friend and favourite General of the greatest and wisest of the Hungarian sovereigns.

which, at a subsequent period, sprang up there, is famous to this day for its skilful masons.

In remembrance of this occurrence, Kinizsi added to his arms a knight with one hand resting upon a tower, the other holding a square stone. His motto: *Posuit ultimum lapidem,** also alludes to this event.

* He placed the last stone.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TATRA MOUNTAINS.

THE county of Zips may fairly be called the Switzerland of Hungary. There the range of the Carpathian mountains, which form the northern boundary between that realm and Poland, reaches its highest point in the vast group of lofty summits, called the Tátra mountains, the lowest of which rises nearly 7000 feet above the level of the sea.

These granite giants, though unadorned by nature's varied tapestry, still, with their snow-clad peaks, rugged perpendicular cliffs, unfathomable precipices and roaring cataracts, vie with the most majestic Alpine scenery, unfolding to the beholder a picture of wild beauty and stern grandeur that at the same time awes and delights.

The loftiest and noblest of this group is the "Lonmitz Head," rising, like a stupendous granite wall, 8000 feet immediately from the table-land,

and rearing its fine conical crest high above the surrounding mountain world.

The Tátra with its many branches, which intersect the country for some hundred miles, is the very region for keen and daring sportsmen, who delight in the excitement and danger of Alpine hunting, and do not object to a hug from Brother Bruin, or to hazárd their lives in pursuing the fleet and wary chamois over dizzy cliffs and abysses.

During the summer months, these mountains, particularly the Lomnitz Head, are frequently visited by the lover of wild rocky scenery as well as by the naturalist, both from Hungary and other countries. Amongst the most distinguished of the foreign visitors, we may mention the late King of Saxony, who, in the year 1847, ascended the Lomnitz Head. In remembrance of that occurrence, a monument of cast iron in the form of a cross, was erected upon the shore of the "Green Lake," a sheet of standing water, which is embedded amidst huge granite walls, on the bosom of the "Head," at an elevation of 6500 feet, and is supplied by a torrent, that falls from a great height into the lake, presenting altogether the wildest and most lonely aspect that fancy can picture.

The inhabitants of this mountainous district—famed as excellent marksmen—are chiefly Germans, interspersed with Slovacks. The former emigrated

to Hungary in the twelfth century, colonised the county of Zips, and transformed its barren soil with their characteristic industry and perseverance, as far as the difficulties permitted, into fertile and arable land.

The Zipsers are an enduring and vigorous race of people, honest and simple in their habits, and remarkable alike for their general mental culture and ardent attachment to liberty and the Protestant faith. Of this they gave countless proofs amidst the vicissitudes their country was subjected to under the Austrian rule. Their devotion, however, reached its height during the memorable period of 1848, when they placed their savings at the disposal of the national Government, and sent thousands of their bravest sons to the plains on the banks of the Theiss against the Austrian and Russian invaders. Hungarians in heart and from conviction, the Zipsers were so deeply affected by the tragic conclusion of the war, that, when the remnant of their gallant bands returned to their mountain fastnesses and related the terrible tidings of their country's downfall, their despair knew no bounds. Many of them put on mourning, never again to lay it aside until they had thrown off the yoke of their oppressors; and one of those simple mountaineers, who deemed Hungary's conquest to be impossible, and thus felt the unex-

pected blow more keenly than the rest, died of a broken heart.

From Käsmark, a neat thriving border-town, in the vicinity of the Lomnitz Head, a road, or rather a pass crosses over the Carpathians to Poland, which, on entering the mountain, leads through a desolate tract of country, encompassed by mighty granite rocks, with only here and there a patch of pine-forest, and the solitary hut of a woodcutter, the stroke of whose axe occasionally breaks the eternal silence around.

It is well worth while to take a peep at this pass, to complete the panorama of the Tátra's savage wonders, and more so for the sake of visiting a spot there, to which, like two distinct echoes, two traditions are attached, each of a different colouring, each of a different age, and both possessing their own peculiar interest.

On proceeding for a short distance along the pass, in the company of a learned Geologist from the neighbourhood, who kindly offered to be our *cicerone*, we come to a pretty Gothic Chapel, erected on a rocky eminence to the right, and sheltered by pine-trees, whose large and lofty trunks tell of centuries gone by. The sight of such an edifice, in the midst of a lonely wilderness, has something peculiarly cheering in it, and we gladly follow the invitation of our guide to mount

the projection, and for a moment pause in our inspection of the Great Architect's sublime structures, to glance at the frail fabric raised by human hands.

Our first pleasant impression is somewhat marred when, on a nearer view, we find the Chapel is fast falling into decay, the consequence rather of neglect than of the ravages of time. Not only is the stone framework of the arched doors and windows partly broken away, and its fragments scattered on the granite pavement; but in the interior the fresco paintings on the walls—apparently representations of battles—are nearly defaced by damp and the many names written and cut upon them. While we attempt to trace the subjects of the paintings, the Geologist relates to us the origin of the building.

"During the gloomiest period of Hungarian history, under the rule of Leopold I., in the second moiety of the seventeenth century, when an open avowal of Protestantism was taxed as a capital crime, and afforded also a ready pretext for political persecution, a wealthy and powerful Protestant magnate, Count Tököli, lived in the county of Zips. Having for a long time past been a thorn in the side of the Austrians on the score of his liberal principles, it required only some plausible excuse to bring down upon him the full weight of their wrath. This Tököli at last afforded them, by pro-

tecting a Protestant community in his neighbourhood against the persecutions of the Jesuits. They immediately seized this favourable opportunity, and dispatched a detachment to arrest him and his family in his castle near Käsmark. Thus taken by surprise, Tököli had but time to forward the escape of his only son Emeric, a boy of ten years, the hope of all good patriots. Whilst he parleyed with the enemy before the gate, the boy left the castle by means of a subterranean passage, accompanied by a trusty servant, whom his sire had ordered to cross over with him to Poland without delay. Finding after the storming of the fortress and a rigorous search, that the young bird had flown, the Austrian commander sent out troops in every direction to secure the fugitive. One of them, having by some means or other discovered that Emeric had taken this mountain pass, directed the pursuit so well, that they came in sight of him here, as he, with the help of his servant, was toiling up that steep and craggy cliff in front of us, in order to reach a dark and precipitous gulf before they were overtaken. The Austrians hailed them to surrender; but as they saw their order was not likely to be obeyed, they discharged their blunderbusses upon them; yet without effect. It is most probable that the report of the guns caused the loosening of an avalanche from the Fejértó Head,

just above, for presently an immense mass of snow and rock thundered down the steep slopes, and completely blocked up the space between the pursued and their pursuers. It took the soldiers several hours to clear a way through that unexpected barricade, during which the fugitives had safely gained Polish soil, and were thus beyond reach of the Austrians.

"After many years of exile, when events turned the scale in favour of Hungary, Emeric, now a man remarkable for many great qualities as a warrior and a statesman, returned to his country, where he so eminently distinguished himself by lending the powerful aid both of his sword and pen to the cause of religious and political liberty, that the nation, to prove their gratitude, chose him for their Prince. Whilst following up his brilliant career, Tököli did not forget the scene of his hair-breadth escape. He visited this spot, where the avalanche, as if at the summons of a higher power, had interposed between him and his enemies, and selected it as the site for a Chapel to be erected for the twofold purpose of commemorating that event and as a place of worship for the Protestant mountaineers of this vicinity: endowing it at the same time with an estate, the proceeds of which were to be devoted to the support of a clergyman for celebrating divine service there every fortnight. The

Chapel was built in 1678, and, notwithstanding the estate was unlawfully appropriated by the Austrian Government, the will of the illustrious founder was faithfully executed until within the last twenty years. Since that time the Chapel has been abandoned."

"And to what cause is this to be attributed?" we naturally ask.

"There are occurrences," replied the Geologist, "which often effect the uprooting of the laws and customs of centuries in the space of as many moments by turning the tide of popular prejudice against objects, no matter whether animate or inanimate, whether guilty or innocent. Such is the case with this Chapel, which has been regarded with superstitious dread from the time a fearful catastrophe took place within its walls; though it was as little responsible for it as the pine-tree we met on our way hither, which, chancing to stand upon the spot where a thunderbolt fell, was struck to the ground, and has ever since gone by the name of 'The Cursed Tree.' The circumstances resulting in that catastrophe as well as in the decay of the Chapel, sprang from an obscure event in the vicinity. The particulars will, however, take some time to relate, during which it will be as well to rest after our weary walk."

We accordingly seat ourselves upon the frag-

ments of the framework, and the Geologist proceeds:

"Some twenty-five years since, the saw-mill in the valley below, which you remarked for the solidity of its construction, was in the possession of one Brettschneider, by the people commonly called 'The Stranger,' on account of his father's having immigrated from Silesia to this valley. At that time I was a young fellow, pursuing my studies at Käsmark, and during the holidays, which were always spent at my father's, the late clergyman of Hochkirch, I was in the habit of visiting Brettschneider's mill, whenever a hunting party—which usually started from thence—was made up; whereby I became tolerably well acquainted with every member of his family.

"Brettschneider, at that period a widower, was a plain and close man of business of some fifty years, who fully understood his calling; that is to say, he could tell at a glance which tree was sound or hollow, and could calculate with accuracy how many planks a trunk would produce, what they would fetch, and in what time they would be ready for floating. He was, besides, an adept rifleman, and could vie with the best marksman in the valley in bringing down a chamois; but beyond that he neither understood nor cared for anything.

"His family consisted of two sons of totally

opposite characters. The elder, Steffel, a fine, sturdy fellow of twenty-four, was his father's right hand, but much disliked in the mill for his overbearing temper and niggardly habits, and feared to a degree by his younger brother, Peter, who, owing to his weakly constitution, and still more to his absent and dreamy way of moving about, was pronounced good for nothing.

"No wonder that the father, who valued his children very much in the same way as he valued the trunks of trees, namely, for the profit they yielded, evinced a decided partiality for Steffel; looking, on the contrary, upon Peter not alone as an expensive and useless appendage to his household but also as the origin of a severe affliction, his wife having died in giving birth to the lad. Each time old Brettschneider saw Peter, he could not help thinking what a poor compensation such a boy was for the loss of an excellent and thrifty helpmate, and treated him accordingly.

"The father's unnatural conduct towards his younger son began at his birth, and ceased only shortly before old Brettschneider himself was laid within four of his own best planks, and for ever removed from the stage of his joys, his labours and his failings. No mother's face was ever bent over Peter to teach him, amidst sweet caresses, the first dearest names of Nature's vocabulary. He

had no one to run to, to tell his little exploits; no bosom on which to lay his pale face, and sob out his childish grief. He grew up in a chilly atmosphere of an unchanging greyish hue, surrounded by people with harsh looks and harsher words. Like a plant reared in a cellar, he bore signs of want of light and warmth in the sickly unfolding both of his mind and body. At the age of fourteen, though tall, he was still almost a child, shy and subdued in his manners, looking upon all around him with dread, and feeling himself an utter stranger under the paternal roof. His timidity and weakness rather aggravated his unhappy position, and as time wore on he became the scapegoat of the whole household. All the mischief that occurred was laid to his charge; and in idle hours people cracked their jokes at the expense of the patient youth. The expression of absence and dreaminess which his countenance gradually assumed, although the result of a passive submission to his hard fate, was interpreted by his family as a mark of innate stupidity; and in the end they decided that he was an idiot. Such was, however, not the case. In spite of so many years of neglect and subjugation, his mind still retained a spark of that vital fire, called poetic genius, that finally led him to a more genial and healthy atmosphere for its development.

"It was on a fine summer's day that Peter, for the first time in his life, ventured beyond the limits of his prison-like home. He sauntered away over the mill-brook and meadows, and wandered on and on, till at length he found himself surrounded by mighty rocks and lofty trees. Instead of being bewildered by the novelty and grandeur of the scene, he experienced an agreeable sensation of relief and, like the bird escaped for the first time from its cage, his spirits instinctively attempted a short flight. Delighted with the experiment, he repeated it again and again, devoting whole days to rambling in the forests and mountains. There, amidst Nature's beauties and wonders, his heart, hitherto yearning in vain for some warm affection, expanded to an invisible soothing and cheering influence, and from that period a new life commenced for the lonely boy, a life of glowing visions. He contracted a sort of companionship with the rocks and trees, with the brooks and flowers; peopling them with the mountain fairies and spirits of whose benevolent acts he had heard such marvellous accounts. To them he would relate his joys and woes in long and touching strains, and with rapture hearken to their replies in the warble of the bird, in the hum of the bee, in the purling of the rivulet; in all the thousand melodious sounds that undulate upon the summer breeze.

"These particulars I gleaned from Peter himself, having formed, during my holidays in 1830, an intimate acquaintance with him; when I found that, in lieu of being an idiot, he possessed besides many good qualities, a latent talent for poetry, which burst into life in the strange manner I have related.

"I first noticed Peter at the saw-mill, on the occasion of a chamois hunt. He was then eighteen. He stood in the court-yard, apart from the company, clad in a dark blue jacket, close-fitting trousers of the same colour, and a broad-brimmed hat, the costume of the Zips. He was pointed out to me, with a significant nod, as 'the idiot.' On looking at him I met his glance, which lighted up with so much intelligence and good-nature as he remarked my friendly smile, that I immediately felt an interest for him. He accompanied the party as far as the nearest pine forest; then he suddenly turned into a side-path, and disappeared among the trees. I did not lose sight of him, and following in the same direction overtook him, sitting on the bank of a rivulet. Leaving the sportsmen to pursue the adventures of the chase, I placed myself by the side of my new acquaintance. After a few encouraging words on my part, his shyness partially wore off and he became more and more communicative. He was evidently at home in the

forest, and with childish familiarity told me of his daily rambles and pastimes. While speaking his absent expression entirely vanished, and his usually pale face was flushed with animation. This and subsequent meetings convinced me that his mind contained valuable materials, which, if properly brought to light, would render him a useful member of society. I need scarcely state, that this discovery increased my interest for the youth, and I did not rest until my father had promised to lend his aid in unfolding his intellectual faculties. So, one afternoon, I induced Peter to come over to Hochkirch, and after he had become accustomed to my father, which was not the case till he had paid us several visits, his studies commenced. My father loved and treated him like a son, and his own willingness to learn caused him to make such rapid progress, that ere I returned to college I anticipated the happiest results. When I took leave the poor boy clung to me and entreated that I would allow him to accompany me. How much I have ever since regretted that it was not in my power to comply with his earnest request! While the youth, under the guidance of my father, was daily advancing in the path of knowledge, an event occurred that produced a sudden and entire revolution in his hitherto quiet and lonely existence.

"Late on a stormy autumn evening the pro-

prietor of a neighbouring mill, also a widower, called upon old Brettschneider in a state of great alarm, to say that his daughter, Mariandel, who had left home that morning to visit a relative in the mountains near the Verestó Head, with the promise of returning in a few hours, had not yet arrived; and he feared the snowstorm, which had burst forth during the afternoon from the Lomnitz Head, must have overtaken her on her way home. He, therefore, besought Brettschneider to allow some of his men to assist him in searching after his child. The saw-miller, willing to aid his neighbour, particularly in so grave an affair, quickly summoned his people to join the afflicted father. But the men, having for a while watched the storm, which swept furiously down the mountain slopes, driving the snow horizontally before it, declared one and all, that no human being who valued his life would venture out on such a fearful night among the mountain gullies. And some of the party having suggested that the girl in all probability would remain with her aunt till the storm was over, the rest easily acquitted their conscience as to their duty to their neighbour, and the disconsolate father walked away as he came, alone. There was, however, one amongst the number who had felt deeply touched as he watched, silently and unheeded, the anguish of the father, and in his

simple way of reasoning came to the conclusion that, though the girl might at that moment be safe under a sheltering roof; still this being but a vague conjecture, it was at any rate worth braving the danger of such a night, on the chance of saving a human life. He, who held this mute consultation with himself, was no other than Peter 'the idiot.' No sooner had this idea struck him, than he resolved at once to carry out his noble intention. He hastily left the room, threw on his fur cloak and seizing his long staff tipped with iron, the sickly youth, strong only in his brave purpose, set out against a blinding storm, and in a few minutes was completely enveloped in the drifting snow.

"It was truly a perilous enterprise and one that, considered in all its details, few men would have had the courage to wage. But Peter, being acquainted with every inch of the country, from having traversed it in all weathers and on innumerable occasions, was fully convinced that he could find his way to the Verestó Head even blindfolded, and he courageously, though with extreme difficulty, pushed on his way towards the mountain, by turns shouting and looking out on every side as far as his sight could reach. After a most fatiguing walk of two hours he safely reached the gorge leading up the mountain, which was in some

measure protected against the fury of the storm. There, to his unutterable delight, at his repeated shouts, a human form crept forth from a fissure in the cliff, which proved to be that of the missing girl. Peter would gladly have at once returned home with her to relieve her anxious father, but he saw from the exhausted state she was in from both cold and terror, that it would not be practicable; he therefore proposed to her to rest for the night in a cave close by. Mariandel thankfully consented, and Peter assisted her thither. In the cave they found a supply of dry wood, which he had previously collected for his own use, as he occasionally spent a night there during his excursions. With the help of flint and steel—to this day the inseparable companion of every mountaineer—he kindled a fire, which soon crackled and blazed cheerily, and near which the exhausted girl, wrapped up in his warm fur cloak, presently fell asleep.

"Hitherto, fully occupied with his little arrangements for her comfort, Peter had had no time to think of aught beside; but now, as he sate opposite to the sleeping girl, in the midst of warmth and peace, whilst without he heard the storm raging and howling through the clefts and ravines, he began musingly to think over the dream-like events of that memorable night. They contained many

things that afforded his artless mind cause for incessant wonderment. To begin with, he wondered at the new and indefinable feeling which for the first time filled his heart with such lively pleasure. He wondered that he, the helpless and despised boy, should suddenly have risen to the important post of a deliverer and protector. How this had come about he did not quite comprehend; but his pleasure was not lessened for all that. Then, stranger still, that the being who had fallen to his care was the very Mariandel who, on one occasion, when the other children of the vicinity would not allow him to join them in their play, and he stole away weeping, ran up to him and throwing her little arms round his neck, tried to console him with the offer of a piece of her cake. The recollection of this had always touched him and now more than ever; and he could not help rejoicing that it was just that same Mariandel whom he had so happily rescued. His wonderings kept still increasing, when his eyes fell upon the lovely face of the girl, that in spite of its paleness and the close-fitting fur cap, was a genuine specimen of a fair Zipser *belle*. How she had grown in height and beauty since that childish scene in the mill-meadow! thought the youth. And his meditations, now entirely led by his heart, rapidly pursued their course. How terrified she must have been whilst

alone exposed to this tempest! What would have become of her had she not found a shelter this bitter cold night? He shuddered as he imagined her possible fate. Her sweet voice still sounded in his ears as she stammered a few words of thanks when he so unexpectedly came to her rescue. How gladly he would extend his night-watch near her to the length of a whole life! By her side he no longer felt himself lonely and forsaken. The more he gazed on those features, which ever and anon seemed to change and to assume new charms as the fire threw its flickering light upon them, the greater the spell became that they were fast exercising over him. His vivid fancy busied itself in adorning the maiden, until he imagined her fairer than the fairest mountain-flower.

"Meanwhile the fire had gradually burnt down to ashes, and the cave was wrapt in darkness. But this change was unremarked by Peter. In proportion as the light from without died away, an inward light—the light of love—kindled in his soul, its rays illuminating, in his mind's eye, that face upon which were written the hieroglyphics of his coming doom. The first effect of this new feeling was characteristic of the unselfish youth, who sighed, 'How gladly would I die for this girl!'

"Towards morning the storm abated, and was followed by a clear and frosty day. 'At early dawn

Peter sallied forth to reconnoitre, when he heard the sound of voices approaching from the valley, and not long after he could distinguish Mariandel's father, accompanied by several men, ascending the defile through the deep snow. Their astonishment, particularly the miller's, at finding Peter already there, changed into boundless delight, as he related the adventures of the preceding night. Still the men looked doubtfully at each other; since it overstepped their comprehension that a stripling, and an idiot into the bargain, should have braved dangers before which stout men like themselves had recoiled with terror. The appearance of the girl, however, who on hearing voices came forth from the cave, put an end to all doubts; and now they overwhelmed the shy youth with thanks and praises. But he saw and heard only Mariandel, as she laughed and wept by turns with joy and gratitude, now bounding into her father's arms, now clinging to her deliverer; and the *naïveté* with which these alternations of feelings were expressed made her really captivating.

"At length the party began to wend their way back to the mill, where Peter was for several days the *fêted* guest of Mariandel's family. The news of his heroic deed spread rapidly through the valley. People were never weary of sounding his praise, generally, however, winding up with the

sorrowful exclamation of: 'What a pity that he is an idiot!'

"It is just possible, that, had Peter at once lost sight of Mariandel, the first impression she had made upon him, deep as it was, would have gradually faded away. But instead of that, he remained for more than a week in the society of the girl, who, prompted by her impulsive nature, did all in her power to show her gratitude to him; so that, when he returned home, his love had already gained a mastery over him, and he clung to her with all the natural fervour of his disposition.

"It was an unfortunate circumstance that the object of that devoted attachment was a simple and frivolous being, who did not at all comprehend the worth of the treasure Providence had placed within her reach. Mariandel, it is true, had her good qualities; yet she was scarcely sixteen, and who can wonder that, at so early an age, she possessed neither the judgment nor the foresight of riper years; that with her gay and thoughtless disposition she would gladly have danced and sung through life; and sometimes even went so far as to have her little coquettish freaks? As we have said, she had her good points, for she felt keenly her obligation towards Peter; but beyond that, it did not occur to her even in her dreams, that the reserved and ungainly youth, who could not dance

a step, who never joked and seldom laughed, entertained a serious affection for her. Even when he read to her his first attempts at poetry—interpreters of his love—she only wondered what he meant, and lauded them merely for the author's sake. She listened, of course, with greater interest, when, in succeeding verses, he sang of her beauty, and felt pleased at being called an 'Ideal,' as she thought it a prettier name than her own. But, in spite of all that, Peter's poetical skill tended rather to increase her share in the general prejudice, that he was not right in his mind.

"On one occasion my father found him busily engaged in composing verses to his lady-love, and thus became privy to the secret of his heart. I have still some of them as well as a few of the letters he afterwards wrote to me; and, though showing a want of early education, they are full of the genuine expressions of a mind both generous and devoted, and display the workings of a fertile imagination. As my father took a deep interest in Peter's future welfare and wished to turn the tide of his energies, which were now expended on his all-absorbing passion, into a more practical channel, he tried to prevail on old Brettschneider to send his son to the excellent private establishment of Professor Sorgenvoll at Leutschau. Brettschneider hesitated a while, for his opinion of his younger

son's capabilities remained unchanged; still with much difficulty he at length consented. This happened a few months after the snowstorm. His father's decision at once put an end to Peter's visionary existence, and induced him to take a step which otherwise the timid youth would perhaps have delayed for years. Prior to his departure, on his way to bid Mariandel farewell, he met her by the mill-brook, where he not only avowed his ardent love for her, but at the same time entreated for hers in return. Confused and overpowered by such an unexpected and bold attack upon her heart, she yielded to his persuasions and consented to accept and to return his affection, without thinking of the meaning and serious consequences of so sacred a pledge.

"In the possession of this precious treasure the exulting youth went to school, determined to win a brilliant future for her, however severe the ordeals through which he might have to pass in its accomplishment.

"But scarcely had he been three months away, when he received a letter from his brother informing him of their father's sudden death, and desiring him to return home immediately. The prospect of a meeting with Mariandel, after what had seemed to him a long separation, greatly softened the effect of this intelligence, and he hastened back to the

valley with a mingled feeling of grief and pleasure. As soon as the funeral had taken place the will was opened and read. Steffel, the elder son, was left sole heir; the testator merely naming the younger, to recommend him to his brother's care. On talking this over with my father some time afterwards, he asserted that old Brettschneider, a few weeks before his death, at my father's earnest solicitation added a codicil to his will, in which he divided his considerable property equally between the two brothers. No such codicil, however, having been found, it was generally supposed by those who knew Steffel's mean and selfish character that he had destroyed it.

"Peter was so ignorant of life, that the fact of being left entirely dependent on his brother's bounty did not even shake the fairy fabric of his happiness; the rough blast that razed it at one fell swoop to the ground came from another and a very different quarter. After the reading of the will, he silently stole to one of the windows overlooking the valley where Mariandel dwelt. Whilst picturing to himself their first meeting in the most glowing colours, he overheard the following fragmentary conversation between two servant-girls:—

"'Is it not a wicked piece of business leaving that poor young man penniless?' remarked one. 'What can he expect from a brother who all his life long has treated him so harshly?'

"'It is certainly a most unchristianly act; and he bears all his misfortunes so meekly!—Poor Peter!' replied the other.

"'Yes, that he does! and I don't think he is at the end of his troubles yet. You know people say that our new master is to wed Mariandel, the miller's daughter. Now, if I am not greatly mistaken, that will bring fresh sorrow upon him.'

"'How so? I have not heard one word about it.'

"'Well, my belief is that Peter is attached to Mariandel. On the day he went to school, I accidentally saw them sitting together for a long time by the side of the mill-brook; then all of a sudden he ran off over hedges and ditches, and, with a happy face, sprang into the cart which was waiting in the court-yard to take him to Leutschau.'

"'So, then, she has left him for another. Well, it is just like her. Sure enough, she is one of the last I should have chosen for a wife, with all her father's riches into the bargain. You know she is so conceited and fond of finery, and how she does toss her head, one would really think she was a countess. And ——'

"Peter had heard enough. The floor seemed sinking under him. The doubt of Mariandel's faith had deprived his reeling brain of all thoughts save one, and that was to hasten at once to her, and satisfy himself of the truth of that fatal gossip.

Guided by this impulse he rushed from the house, and ran until he reached her dwelling almost breathless.

"He found the girl in the kitchen alone, and occupied in preparing the evening meal. She was so startled by his impetuous entry, that she let a pan which she was holding fall into the fire.

"In order to comprehend the ensuing scene, it is necessary to say a few words as to what had occurred at the mills whilst Peter was at school. You are already aware that she never really entertained an attachment for him. No sooner, therefore, had she plighted her faith than she regretted her rashness, and felt quite angry with him for having almost wrested it from her without giving her time to reflect. His absence did not in the least soften her anger; and to make matters worse, shortly after Peter's departure, his handsome and lively brother Steffel commenced paying her marked attentions. She did not consider herself for a moment bound by her hasty promise, and following the dictates of her coquettish disposition, or perhaps in this instance, those of a real affection, she accepted the proposal of her new lover. The faint remnant of her scruples concerning her former pledge, Steffel quieted by declaring that his brother did not know what he was about, and that he was sure he would sooner or later go mad. So, with a

hushed conscience, she agreed to break off all acquaintance with him at the very first opportunity. Notwithstanding this resolution, she was so completely thrown off her guard at the sudden arrival of the decisive moment that she could scarcely speak, and trembled violently.

"'Oh, Peter, how you have frightened me!' she exclaimed, busying herself with the overturned pan, that she might avoid looking at him.

"'I am sorry the sight of me has given you such alarm,' he replied, still gasping for breath; 'I thought you would be glad to hear of my return from my own lips.'

"'But you stumbled in so abruptly that I almost fancied I saw your ghost. You know how I dread ghosts when it begins to grow dark.'

"Saddened by this cold reception, Peter continued in a trembling voice: 'You can scarcely imagine how I longed for a few words of consolation from your dear lips. For I, too, fancied I saw a ghost suddenly appear before I left home that still hovers around me; but which, by a word, a look, you could charm away for ever. Tell me, Mariandel, tell me truly, am I still dear to you?'

"'I hear some one coming,' she exclaimed in great confusion. 'For pity's sake leave me; do not let us be seen together.'

"'Peter instantly stepped into the court-yard;

but after listening for a while, he returned and said:

"'There is no one stirring near the house. Your father is with my brother up at the saw-mill, and the maids are milking. You may, therefore, without fear, grant me a few minutes' conversation. Oh! let me ask you again, am I not already a stranger to your heart?'

"'You quite embarrass me with your importunate questions,' she replied, with a look of offended dignity. 'The fact is, I ought never to have listened to your assurances of love; you were too young, and are still a mere schoolboy.' Here a long and painful silence ensued, which at last was broken by Peter.

"'This, then, is your answer,—your only welcome for me? How different were your parting words!'

"'But then you took me quite by surprise; since that time I have come to the conclusion that circumstances would never allow of our marrying, as you have no means.'

"'True, I have nothing now; yet many others have commenced life poor like myself, and by persevering industry became wealthy and powerful. Why may I not as well one day gain an honourable independence?' he asked in a tone of self-reliance.

"'I doubt whether that day ever will come,' she returned impatiently.

"'Many years may pass ere it arrives,' he replied; 'and during that long delay you will have no other compensation than my poor love. I know, I feel the magnitude of such a sacrifice; but,' he added, imploringly, 'should you ever be treated as I have been; should you ever stand alone and forsaken in the world; then, perhaps, if not now, you will welcome an affection such as mine; only do not reject me for another; do not banish me to my former dreary life!'

"'But I have also been told that you never will be able to make your way in the world.'

"'I see some one has been trying to prejudice you against me in my absence. Who could have been so base? And why am I incapable of gaining a livelihood?'

"'It was not said with any bad feeling towards you,' she hesitatingly rejoined. 'Your brother merely once hinted something of the sort to me—that is, he said—but no, no—I cannot tell you; you look so very pale and excited!'

"'Nay, you need not fear,' he stammered, scarcely able to articulate from agitation; 'tell me all; it cannot hurt me more than your altered look and manner.'

"'So be it then,' she continued, with a kind of

desperate resolution; 'he said you never could get on—because—you—are—an idiot!'

"The word was spoken; the last between Peter and Mariandel. It would have been better for both of them if it never had been spoken; so thought the girl too, a moment later, on seeing the effect it produced. And in the first agony of remorse and grief she would have perhaps sacrificed her life to have unsaid it. But as the course of a bullet when once fired cannot be changed, neither can any earthly power alter the meaning and weight of a fatal word, when once it has escaped the lips. Thus it was with that word 'idiot;' it crushed a life full of promise in the germ; depriving it at once of light, of warmth and of air. So violent was its effect upon the youth's mind, that at the moment its meaning struck him his ghastly features literally assumed the look of an idiot. For an instant he stood like one in a trance, and then fled as if pursued by a phantom until he disappeared in the dusk of twilight. But long after the sound of his staggering steps had ceased, the terrified girl still heard him shrieking out, 'An idiot! An idiot!' At midnight my father was aroused by a visit from Peter, who instinctively sought refuge under the roof where a few months back the first light of knowledge had dawned upon him. He was, however, no longer the gentle and

intelligent youth; he looked so changed, so broken and wretched, that my father had some difficulty in recognising his former pupil. To him he related in very incoherent language the occurences of the day; repeatedly stopping and muttering that ominous word in heart-rending accents Nothing could be done to console and tranquilise him, and towards morning he hurried off to the mountains. He was subsequently seen in a pitiable condition wandering about the favourite haunts of his early dreams; then he disappeared altogether, and as weeks passed without any traces of him having been found, it was generally supposed he had fallen into one of the gullies, and there perished.

"The anguish of a few hours was all the punishment Mariandel received for the misery she had wrought. She sought to forget even the memory of her unfortunate lover in the anticipation of a bright future and amidst bridal preparations; and was rather relieved by the report of his probable destruction in the mountains.

"The day for the marriage of Steffel and Mariandel at length arrived. Towards noon, when a number of mountaineers had assembled at the house of her father, the party set out in carts and on horseback for this very Chapel, where service was then regularly performed. On leaving her home the bride caught her veil on a nail, and tore

it so completely that she was compelled to proceed to church without it. This the guests looked upon as a bad omen, in which belief they were strengthened by the dogs in the yard at the same moment beginning to howl mournfully, 'as if they saw a spirit.' My father having declined to officiate on this occasion, the clergyman of Horka was summoned to perform the ceremony, which commenced as soon as the wedding-party arrived. At the moment the clergyman came to that solemn warning, 'I require and charge you both,' &c., he was interrupted by an occurrence which gave a most unexpected and tragic turn to the proceedings. At that window, where now the branch of a pine-tree intrudes upon the solitude of the chapel, a spectral form appeared looking down through a broken pane upon the kneeling pair with an expression of wild despair in its ghastly countenance. This strange apparition produced a startling effect upon all present, particularly upon the bride, who immediately fainted; whilst at the same time several voices exclaimed: 'The ghost of the idiot!' It was, however, no ghost, but Peter himself; though his emaciated figure bore a striking resemblance to the shadowy visions we imagine ghosts to be. No one ever found out whence he came, how he had obtained the knowledge of Mariandel's wedding-day, or how he had climbed unseen to his perilous post of obser-

vation; suffice it to say that there he stood, an unbidden and appalling witness at his brother's nuptials.

"When the excitement was at its height, the scene changed again and closed as abruptly as it commenced. The better to maintain his insecure footing on the pine-tree, Peter leant his full weight against the middle shaft of the window. The frail structure gave way under the pressure, and fell with him upon the granite pavement just in front of the bride. He sustained a mortal wound on the head, from which the life blood gushed over the pavement, leaving dark spots discernible to this very day. Peter was instantly removed and laid beside the spring that issues from the rock near the Chapel; there the last spark of life died away. At my father's desire he was buried in the cave beneath the Verestó Head, where he had dreamed the sweetest and happiest of his dreams, and where he now reposes beyond the storms and vicissitudes of human existence.

"It may readily be imagined that such a terrible interruption was sufficient to prevent the ceremony proceeding. The Chapel was presently emptied, and the guests dispersed without farther warning. The bride and bridegroom left to themselves, returned home accompanied by the just condemnation of their neighbours, who naturally attributed

the youth's untimely fate to the heartlessness of the girl and to the foul conduct of his brother.

"The marriage was afterwards privately concluded at Käsmark. It proved, however, a miserable one. Steffel and his wife lived in perpetual strife; no child blessed their union, and they failed in everything they undertook; till at length, overwhelmed by debts, they were compelled to part with their mill. Steffel then settled as a charcoal-burner in the mountains, but with no better success. In order to drown his cares he took to drinking, joined a band of smugglers, and was shot in an encounter with the Austrian Finance Guard, leaving his wife totally destitute. She is now a decrepit woman, with not a trace of her former beauty, begging her daily bread from the inhabitants of the valley, who retain a traditional recollection of the idiot, and look upon her both with pity and aversion. She lives in a miserable hovel close to our homeward path; and we will, if you like, pay a visit to the once fair miller maiden.

"This catastrophe cast a deep shadow upon the hallowed walls of the Chapel. A superstitious feeling against it arose, and the mountaineers preferred walking miles to another church rather than be disturbed in their devotions by recollections of so painful a nature. Thus service was discontinued, and the building left to decay; which,

notwithstanding occasional repairs, has gone on rapidly, owing to the moist and rigid climate that predominates in this wild mountain region."

The narrator ceased.

The chill atmosphere and dim light that pervaded the place tended not a little to heighten the melancholy his recital had excited; and we almost fancied we could see, amongst the bushy pine leaves, Peter's shadowy form resting against the window, as it did some twenty years ago. We were at length glad to leave the mouldering walls, and to find ourselves once again beneath the blue vault of heaven, whence the noontide sun sent its genial beams into the narrow glen, gradually dispelling the gloom that during the narrative had settled itself upon our spirits.

CHAPTER X.

ERLAU AND ITS VINE CULTURE.

It would appear as if the patriotic blood so profusely shed in defence of the religious and political liberties of Hungary had, by a kind Providence, been transmuted into the ruby and golden juice which gushes in a thousand streamlets from every hillside in the land, in order again to find its way into the veins of posterity, and thus keep alive that heroic spirit which for centuries so successfully resisted all the storms and vicissitudes of time.

Hungary, as it is well known, is a wine-growing country. The first vines were introduced during the third century into Syrmiam, one of its southern provinces, by the Roman Emperor Probus, who, instead of employing his legions to devastate the country, set them to cultivate the fertile regions along the banks of the Lower Danube. But, although both climate and soil were highly favourable to the growth of that valuable plant, its culture, owing to the unsettled state of the country,

only became general as late as the twelfth century. Since then vineyards have overspread most of the lower ridges as well as large tracts of the plains; so that at the present time they cover 1,400,000 acres of land, producing yearly not less than 30,000,000 *Akós**—480,000,000 gallons—of wine. Of this enormous supply a third is white; amongst which the fiery nectar of a clear yellowish green hue and sweet aromatic flavour, called Tokaj, takes precedence. It grows on the chalky hills near the town of Tokaj, and under that name has, since its first production in 1660, attained European celebrity. Of the red there are many excellent varieties, which in strength, fire and flavour may fairly compete with the finest Burgundy; those of Erlau and Buda—Ofner—ranking the first on the list. A short account of the vine-culture in the former place will give a tolerable idea of the manner in which it is carried on throughout the country.

Nearly midway between Pesth and Tokaj, two miles north of the road running along the southern declivities of the rugged Mátra mountains, a smiling valley opens towards the plains, disclosing the vista of an extensive town with glittering spires and cupolas, crowned by the mighty ruins of a fortress.

* An *Akó* is equal to sixteen gallons.

Gentle hills dotted with countless villas enclose that charming spot, which in its sequestered and picturesque nook looks the very type of rural plenty, content and peace. This is Erlau, the capital of the county of Heves, and one of the prettiest provincial towns of Hungary. It rises in terraces from the banks of a small river, arched over by several massive bridges, each ornamented with statues of saints. The peaked-roofed houses are whitewashed, and, though of simple construction, display an air of neatness and prosperity.

The episcopal cross having for seven centuries exercised both spiritual and seigneurial authority over the 20,000 inhabitants, has kept them faithful to the Roman Catholic creed; and owing to this as well as to the presence of various religious orders, who dwell in six spacious monasteries, the town has acquired the surname of "little Rome." Unlike, however, their brothers in ancient Rome, the priests of Erlau never attempted either to extinguish the light of knowledge or to extirpate the germ of freedom; but employed both their power and wealth to establish several public institutions for the gratuitous instruction of the people, and in time of danger even from the pulpit exhorted their flock to take up arms in defence of their fatherland; not unfrequently carrying their patriotism still farther by placing themselves at the

head of the volunteers, as the *curé* of Erlau did during the invasion of the Austrians in 1838.

Among several fine architectural monuments in the town are two which at once betoken the spirit of their founders, the bishops, and for their magnificence and vast dimensions would be an ornament to any metropolis. One of them is the majestic Dome, built in the Grecian style, its interior supported by two rows of rich marble columns, and bearing upon its imposing front the true christian inscription: *Venite adoremus Dominum.** This edifice was erected by Archbishop Pyrker, who, though an Hungarian by birth, ranks amongst the most celebrated epic poets of Germany. Opposite to the Dome stands its noble rival the so-called Lyceum. This gorgeous structure with its gilded cupolas and towering observatory, its painted halls and chapel, is truly worthy the residence of the mightiest of the sovereigns of Knowledge. The following dialogue which took place between the founder, Bishop Count Eszterházy, who was also Lord Lieutenant of the county of Heves, and the Emperor Joseph II., gives some idea of the impression it produces at first sight. The Emperor, chancing to visit Erlau just at the time of its completion, that is in 1785, was so much struck with

* Come, let us adore the Lord.

the splendour of the building that he inquired how many princes had contributed towards its construction? "Only three unpretending people," replied the prelate, "the Bishop of Erlau, Count Eszterházy, and the Lord Lieutenant of Heves." The stones for the Lyceum were taken from the extensive ruins of the fortress which played so important a part during the protracted warfare with the Turks. Those walls, formerly the arena of sanguinary encounters, and echoing but the clashing of arms and the war cry of deadly foes, now resound with the peaceful and enlightening discourses of the professors and the buzz of a multitude of scholars swarming to and fro in quest of instruction. Truly a strange contrast, and one which well characterizes the spirit of the two ages; the one of brute force, and the other of intellectual power. We, for our part, are of opinion that the bastions of the fortress first became the genuine bulwarks of civilization and humanity when they were transferred to their present destination. The schools are endowed with prodigal munificence, and more than eight hundred youths yearly attend the gratuitous courses in philosophy, jurisprudence and theology.

The town still bears witness of the dominion of the Crescent, which for an entire century surmounted its walls. Several families have preserved

their Turkish names, such as *Ali*, *Hadji*, &c.; and in the middle of the town, by the side of an ancient chapel of peculiar structure, once used as a mosque, but now occupied by the Brothers of Mercy, stands a Minaret, its elegant palmlike form rising two hundred feet into the air. It is still in excellent preservation, and on looking upwards we almost expect to see the Muezzin step into the gallery to announce the hour of prayer to the faithful. Yet times have changed; and, in lieu of the waving garment of a living Mahometan bell, we descry but a hawk or buzzard flitting about the small door of the gallery, which, were we believers in metempsychosis, we might imagine to be the present embodiments of the departed Muezzins still keeping watch upon their elevated post. Some years back the Minaret was roofed at the expense of the archbishop; and the Moslem pilgrims, who now and then visit the graves of one or other of their holy men interred in Hungary, may rejoice at the sight of the Crescent still shining, though from a deserted building, with undimmed splendour above a christian town.

The inhabitants of Erlau—excepting some three hundred Greeks, the lords of commerce there—are all genuine Magyars. A mild climate, a bright cloudless sky, the possession of luxuriant fruit and vine gardens and constant intercourse with nature

render them a happy and contented people, who, though divided as to their social position, yet with regard to their patriotism and the culture of the vine, find their interests and cares, hopes and wishes concentrated in one common focus. Every family, however poor, possesses a vineyard and a humble cottage, if not in town at least in the mountains. To each household is appended, as a *sine qua non*, a cellar, containing at any rate a cask of wine to keep the spirits of the owner in a cheerful state. There is likewise another commodity with which the vintner can ill dispense, and that is a vehicle, varying from the handsome carriage and four of the wealthy down to the humble donkey cart of the day labourer. Incessant occupation in the vineyards has endowed the people of Erlau with a rich vein of good humour, investing all their sayings and doings with an enviable air of freshness and joyousness. Whether they hasten at early dawn to the mountains with their implements slung across their shoulders, prepared for a hard day's toil, or at nightfall bend their steps homeward in picturesque groups, or in their recreations on the Sunday afternoons, they are ever to be heard singing their own lays set to pretty melodies also composed by themselves; for the Hungarians are at home with the Muses, and need not seek their inspirations on Mount Panassus. The tute-

lary spirit of the town has so far softened even the religious views of the populace that bigotry, so common in purely Roman Catholic communities, is an exotic upon Erlau ground. For example, an Englishman on presenting himself at a monastery, though, as a matter of course, looked upon as a Protestant, will nevertheless be welcomed by the Superior in true Hungarian fashion, perhaps even in his own language, and as a friendly pledge a bumper of the best wine will be offered to him, a bottle of which is always at hand for such occasions.

On Sunday afternoon when service is over, whilst the young people meet for dancing, the married men, clad in a dark paletot or white bournous, are to be seen leisurely sauntering towards their cellars in the outskirts of the town; the procession gradually falling off as group after group disappears behind the massive doors, which they carefully shut that they may not be disturbed in the sacrifice they are about to offer up in the bowels of the earth to one of the most popular of the Pagan divinities. Here and there a solitary individual still loiters at the door, and while twirling his moustache keeps a sharp look out for the purpose of waylaying some passer by; and whoever chances to be the first who comes within hailing reach, no matter if an utter stranger, will be cordially invited to step into his cool cellar. Such an

invitation, especially on a hot summer's day, is not to be withstood. We will suppose ourselves to have been thus waylaid, and accordingly follow our unknown host into a spacious hall, containing a variety of vats and casks, and likewise a wooden winepress. Our host, who, as he informs us, is a member of the guild of lacemakers, presently puts his flint and steel into requisition, lights a candle fixed into a piece of wooden hoop, and precedes us down a steep flight of stairs into a subterraneous gallery hewn out of the rock, which ever and anon branches off to the right and left without any apparent termination, since, excepting the dim light near us, all is wrapt in impenetrable darkness. In this underground labyrinth we feel ourselves entirely at the mercy of our new acquaintance, whose manly, honest face is the only guarantee we have for again beholding the light of day. As we move slowly along, we remark on both sides long rows of casks, holding from three to twelve *Akós;* the proprietor meanwhile amusing us with the history and peculiar qualities of this or that year's growth of wine, and of the mystic connection existing between the vine and its spirituous produce contained in the vessels around, which every spring, when the first shoots come forth, heaves and ferments as if unhappy in its gloomy, narrow prison, and thus sought to burst its bounds and escape to its birth-

place on the sunny, verdant hills. After listening a while to this imaginative discourse, we begin to fancy ourselves in the dominion of a sorcerer, who keeps a host of spirits imprisoned in the grim looking casks ready to be called forth at his will to work some mischief or other on his unsuspicious guests. At length the guide halts, sticks his primitive candlestick into a hole in the wall, and then spreads the contents of a bundle, consisting of a cold ham, sausages, roasted fowl and an excellent loaf, upon the top of an empty cask. We seat ourselves upon others of smaller size, and at the summons of our host commence an attack on the savoury viands. And now the true enjoyment of our cellar party begins, viz., the tasting of the various wines. The lacemaker, armed with a goblet and a glass siphon very much resembling a magic wand, is perpetually on the move, going and coming in the dark, and always returning with a fresh kind of choice fiery wine, exhibiting every shade from the darkest ruby to the lightest red. With a look of intense satisfaction he holds up each glass to the candle to show its sparkling properties and splendid hue, and we cannot resist at least a taste of every fresh specimen, more especially so as the ham requires to be frequently moistened. After each sip the host's eyes glisten more brightly, his tongue runs more glibly; until, without a shade of

distrust, like a talkative child, he makes us the confidant of his joys and sorrows; of the latter the deepest being caused by Austrian oppression, which, he says, is a hundred times worse than even the Turkish yoke was.

On mentioning the Turks, the lacemaker becomes yet more talkative, for he knows numerous traditions of that period when even the women of Erlau turned heroines to battle with and chase away the infidels from their firesides; and he courteously offers to relate one from his store, which possesses an additional charm at least in his eyes from its connexion with his own family. We of course consent, and the host begins as follows:—

"Towards the middle of the seventeenth century the Turks possessed more than the moiety of our land. Their dominion, however, was chiefly confined to the ramparts of the fortresses in their power. Beyond these but little belonged to them, and that little was continually disputed by the ever-watchful and ever-contending people, who, however badly armed, not unfrequently put to flight the best janissaries and spahis of the sultan.

"In the mountainous parts of the land, which particularly favoured military undertakings, a lasting guerilla warfare was kept up. As it often happens in such cases, many thousand patriots, who had some heavy loss or personal injury to avenge,

had sworn eternal feud against their hereditary foe. They united into small bands or fraternities, under the guidance of one of the nobles, and from the mountains made sallies to attack their oppressors, and even to surprise them in their fortresses, filling their hearts with terror at the sight of their usually victorious standards.

"In such fraternities the father brought up his son to be a warrior, and when dying delivered up to him his arms, which whilst living he never dared to lose sight of. The gallant deeds thus performed are even now celebrated by the people in ancient songs; one of which relates to a bold feat of arms of a certain Lelkem, who was an ancestor of mine, and likewise the chief of a guerilla band.

"After our important fortress had been captured by the Turks, and the garrison put to the sword, a small troop succeeded in cutting their way through the army of the enemy and in escaping to the wild Mátra mountains. This troop formed one of the most daring and successful bands which embittered the dominion of the Mahometans. Their ranks were recruited by three generations of the inhabitants of Erlau.

"At that time, when the Crescent, overthrown under the walls of Vienna, began to grow pale in Hungary, the chief of the Erlau guerillas was that same Lelkem, a young and fiery patriot. He constantly

harassed the garrisons of Erlau, Hatvan, Szolnok and other places, by capturing their convoys and defeating their troops. On one occasion he accomplished a very successful expedition by unexpectedly falling upon a treasure convoy in Gyöngyös,* on its way from Erlau to Buda, and cutting down the whole escort.

"While his men were engaged in a combat with the Turks in the streets of the town, Lelkem heard a cry for help from a neighbouring house. He leaped off his horse, rushed in and found a Turkish soldier ill-treating an Hungarian girl. With a stroke of his flashing sword he split the infidel's head, and liberated her from his grasp. Exhausted and subdued by terror, the girl lay senseless on the ground. Lelkem, with the aid of some women, soon restored her to consciousness. The girl was the very type of Hungarian beauty, with black eyes and hair, the charming expression of her face heightened by a gleam of gratitude towards her deliverer. To the young man she seemed the fairest of all the maidens he had ever beheld. The girl, too, on recovering, thought the chief just what she in her lively fancy had imagined a true Magyar hero to be—tall, stately, with sparkling

* Gyöngyös, a town at the foot of the Mátra mountains, containing 15,000 inhabitants.

eyes, the terror of the enemy and the friend and willing protector of the helpless and unhappy.

"In our country love soon takes root, and increases with a rapid and marvellous growth. The young man remained but a short time with the maiden; still it sufficed to fill their hearts with a sentiment not easily to be effaced. Lelkem left the girl, whose name was Irma, with a promise of soon returning, but that promise was more easily made than fulfilled; for scarcely had the news of the loss of the costly convoy reached Erlau, than the infuriated Pasha sent a strong garrison to Gyöngyös, and ordered a hot pursuit after the bold guerilla chief; so that Lelkem, for a time, was an unwilling prisoner in his inaccessible lurking-place in the Mátra.

"As a punishment for the loss of the money, a contribution was levied on the town of Gyöngyös, and at the same time, to insult the inhabitants in their most sacred feelings, the Pasha commanded the delivery of twelve of their most beautiful daughters for the harem of the Pasha of Buda. The consternation and the wrath of the poor townspeople at this twofold outrage knew no bounds; but, conscious of their weakness, they submitted to the sentence, and, as neither entreaties nor promises could soften the inflexible Turkish commander, presented their girls for se-

lection to the officer sent for that purpose from Erlau. Among the number chosen was the unhappy Irma.

"Lelkem speedily received this dreadful intelligence. His instant determination was to prevent the maidens from being carried off; but for the moment he was quite at a loss to devise a plan likely to prove successful against the numerous garrison of Gyöngyös. In the midst of this dilemma he was interrupted by the arrival of a messenger from his uncle, the Prior of a monastery of Carmelites in that neighbourhood, summoning the chief to an immediate conference, which Lelkem did not delay attending to, knowing his uncle, who had already often assisted him with good advice during his expeditions, to be a wise and patriotic man.

"He found the Prior in great excitement as to the fate of the unfortunate town. The monk conjured Lelkem, by his Christian faith and his love for his country, now to show what enthusiasm the Hungarian was capable of in the defence of his rights and his countrywomen. He then proposed to him to go to the town dressed as a monk, and there to agree upon a scheme with the inhabitants. The first part of this proposal was easily effected, as a few hours previously Dulo, the father of Irma, had sent to the monastery for a priest to pray by

his daughter, who was then dangerously ill. Lelkem was for a moment unmanned by this sad information, but by a violent effort he checked his feelings, and declared his readiness to comply with the wish of his uncle. He hastily put on a cowl and left the monastery mounted upon a mule. He had the good fortune to pass the Turkish outposts unremarked, and arrived at the dusk of evening, accompanied by Dulo's messenger, in Gyöngyos.

"With the capuchin drawn over his head Lelkem entered Irma's room. She was much changed during the few weeks that had elapsed since he saw her, and was so exhausted that the pretended monk had to bend over her to catch her whispered words. He could not long carry on his disguise, and exclaimed, with all the fervour of his heart, 'I am not a monk, Irma, but thy warrior, and am come to cure and to save thee; for as long as I live thou shalt not fall into the power of the infidels!' At the sound of that voice, the tone of which she had never forgotten, the girl thought she dreamt; but again looking into his truthful, manly face, she saw that all was a happy reality and she seemed to live anew.

"The guerilla chief likewise disclosed his secret and his intention to her father, who, cheered by his presence, instantly stole away to others of his tried and brave neighbours, inviting them to

meet at his house. The men came. As it was supposed that the escort, with the tribute of the town, on proceeding to Buda, would halt for a night at the fortress of Hatvan, half way between Gyöngyös and Buda, at the proposal of Lelkem a daring plan was projected and resolved upon.

"Two days later an order came to deliver up the tribute of money and of women. The mayor by presents obtained the permission of the commander that the maidens should be allowed to remain veiled during their journey, until they were introduced into the presence of the Pasha of Buda. All happened as they wished. At the moment of their departure they were taken in closed litters from their dwellings, and left Gyöngyös under a strong escort, accompanied by the fervent prayers of the inhabitants for their safety. As they proceeded very slowly, they did not reach Hatvan till late in the evening, whereupon the Aga resolved not to go any farther that night. While preparations were making for the accommodation of the unusual guests, the commander of the fortress attempted once or twice to pay a visit of ceremony to the maidens; but the matron under whose care they were, an energetic Hungarian woman, remained inflexible, and after a short contest rescued them from the presence of a very unwelcome visitor.

"At midnight, when all was hushed around, the sentinel at the door of the house where the maidens rested, had he been more vigilant, must have heard the opening of a window above his head, and seen a human form cautiously commence descending. The sentinel, however, dreaming perhaps of Mahomed's paradise, remarked neither the slight noise, nor the figure in whom the chief was easily recognised, which by degrees glided down the high wall, till it stood like a menacing shadow behind him. Here a heavy fall was heard, followed by a dull groan; then all became quiet as before. The sentinel being no longer in the way, eleven other forms let themselves down from the window, one and all bearing greater resemblance to stalwart warriors than to gentle maidens. Lelkem hastily gave his commands in a suppressed voice; and after leaving two men at the door of the dwelling, they vanished into the dark and deserted street which led to the east gate. There they surprised the small guard with equal ability, and cut the men down before they could even think of resistance. But in spite of their quick and cautious proceedings, they were detected by a Turkish sentinel who fired his gun, which aroused the others at their posts on the walls, and the alarm-drum soon re-echoed from every quarter of the place.

"No time was now to be lost. The gate was

forced open with all speed, the drawbridge let down. Lelkem gave a shrill whistle, and on its being repeated at a distance from the fortress, in a short time a band of 150 brave men rushed in through the open gate. Lelkem placing himself at their head, led them to a decisive attack on the barracks, where the Turks already began to rally in overwhelming numbers. The battle ensued in the market-place, where the dwelling of the commander and the barracks stood, and where the mass of the garrison was arrayed. Lelkem's irresistible charge, and the death of the Pasha, who fell at the beginning of the engagement, soon discouraged the Turks; darkness and confusion did the rest; and after a short and sanguinary massacre, they surrendered to the mercy of the victorious Hungarians. The garrison still numbered six hundred men, who were greatly surprised to find that they were conquered by so small a band. You will have already guessed that, instead of the supposed maidens, Lelkem and eleven of his men, disguised in female attire, formed the party so carefully escorted to the fortress, which enabled them to accomplish their hazardous undertaking.

"At the news of the fall of Hatvan the greater part of the inhabitants of Gyöngyös fled to that stronghold, to seek shelter against the vengeance of the Turks, and they were determined, in case of

a serious attack, to die under the ruins of its walls.

"Among the arrivals were Irma and her father. Lelkem, now commander of a fortress, the fruit of his bold enterprise, celebrated his marriage with his beloved Irma, who was accompanied to the altar by her eleven beautiful companions so gallantly rescued by the bridegroom.

"The strong site of Hatvan in the bogs of the Zagyva-river, and still more the events that led to the recapture of Buda by the imperial forces, left the guerilla chief of Erlau in the undisturbed possession of his fortress and of his well-deserved happiness."

The lacemaker's warlike tale increases his zeal in producing fresh samples of wine, and we continue to taste and sip, when, to our great surprise, we discover that midnight is near; we, therefore, make good our retreat, after taking a farewell bumper, which is called St. John's blessing, and without which no Erlauman considers a convivial entertainment complete. We find our suspicions regarding the mischievous spirits conjured up from the casks fully confirmed, since, on ascending the stairs, the entrance seems to have considerably narrowed, and when we get into the open air, with the moon shining brightly above us, the shadows of the fences and houses assume fantastic and spec-

tral forms, which our lacemaker declares can start up at pleasure and flit with us on our homeward way. He tells us stirring stories of the doings of these airy beings; how they lead people astray when returning from their cellars, enticing them to the brink of some precipice, and pushing them head foremost into the depths beneath. He likewise assures us that more than once he has been followed to his own door by a monk, carrying his head under his arm like a *chapeau bas*, from whose grasp he saved himself solely by means of a rather energetic exorcism.

Not satisfied with our protracted subterranean party our host will not let us depart till, *bon gré mal gré*, we have named an early day for accompanying him to his vineyard.

The town of Erlau, save to the south, is enclosed by gently undulating offshoots of the Mátra, gradually swelling up into higher and bolder forms until they join the chain of mountains that offer an imposing as well as protecting background to the vineyards against the rough blasts of the north winds. The cultivation of the vine begins where the last hut in the suburbs ends. Having once set foot upon the territory of King Bacchus, or St. Donatus, as he is now christened, we may ramble for miles through charming dales and over mountains, along roads skirted by high hedges of bramble,

sweetbriar and blackthorn, with a never-ending prospect of vines and fruit trees. The mountains are divided into many districts, each bearing a distinct denomination, such as Africa, Anglia, &c., and guarded by keepers, who are answerable for all the damage that occurs. Each of these districts contains hundreds of individual property of various extent. The vines do not exceed three feet in height and are planted in rows at intervals of a foot and a half; the rows running parallel with the declivities of the hills. Of the many varieties of grapes, the burgundy, black muscadine and formint are the most cultivated. But few trees are left to grow amongst the vines; for that purpose there is an orchard attached to every vineyard, well filled with fruit trees, and containing also a kitchen garden. In the orchard either a villa or a hut may be found, peeping forth right invitingly from beneath an ancient walnut or pear tree.

At the sight of such extensive vine lands within the precints of a single town, the natural inquiry will suggest itself, of how is it possible to keep them in a flourishing state with the aid of only some 10,000 pair of hands? Whereon our kind guide gives the following information. If none of the blessings of nature afford to mankind the same amount of pleasure as the vine, there is likewise none whose cultivation requires so much care and

toil. Yet the unceasing industry of those 10,000 pair of hands overcomes every difficulty, and furnishes the necessary labour. The common Erlau vine grower usually lives six months out of the twelve in his vine garden. There he with his elder sons may be seen working away before daybreak and long after sunset with untiring zeal, returning to town but for Sundays or holidays. The work is manifold, and may be thus briefly specified. In autumn the strongest and healthiest offsets, destined for the propagation of the vines, are separated from the parent plants and housed in the cellars. After this the vines are covered with earth to protect them from the frost. The first regular work of the season begins in March with uncovering the vines and planting out the cuttings and layers. At the end of March, the last year's shoots, save three or four, are cut away, the latter being left to the second or third joint for the better production of the grapes. In April the soil is turned up and weeded. In May stakes are set by the plants, and the branches fastened thereto with bast. In June comes the second and in July the third hoeing and the shortening of the bearing shoots; and when the weather has been particularly favourable for the growth of weeds a fourth hoeing ensues. Towards the end of August early kinds of grapes begin to ripen, and at the com-

mencement of October, the whole crop having arrived at full maturity, the vintage takes place. The average produce of the Erlau mountains amounts yearly to half a million *Akós*, whereof the share of the poor man who hires out his labour does not exceed forty, whilst the wealthy proprietor raises crops yielding a thousand *Akós*. A southerly aspect, with a gravelly or rocky soil, are most favourable for the growth of vines. In the third year they already produce a good crop of grapes, which by proper management continues during thirty or forty years.

A month previous to the most interesting period in the yearly life of the people of Erlau, the preparations for collecting the crops begin. The town from one extremity to the other presents a scene of unusual stir and excitement, and resounds with the strokes of the hammer upon the divers wooden vessels, which are being hooped, scalded and otherwise made ready for the reception of their turbulent liquid guests from the mountains. In the markets, streets, houses, in the courts and yards the people are carting, rolling along, and bargaining for the oaken casks and birch hoops brought down from the forests of the Mátra, which form a lucrative branch of industry of the mountaineers.

A fortnight later the day for the opening of the vintage is officially announced.

In Erlau, as in many similar primitive corners of the world, the town drummer is the medium of all public announcements, whether relating to the loss of a dog or the execution of a condemned felon. The drummer is generally an old soldier, who, having ended his military career, has become a member of the executive power of the town; receiving for his noisy calling a salary of four pounds together with his lodging, uniform, two pair of boots, six bushels of wheat, the same quantity of corn, and besides an extra half florin—one shilling—whenever his drum and lungs are called into action.

On no occasion does he assume an air of greater importance than when, on sallying forth from the town hall in full parade, he turns his rubicund face towards the market-place, where the multitude impatiently await the proclamation of the festive season. There he stands, a worthy representant of Bacchus, and whilst the red standard—the sign of the vintage—is unfurled from the hall of justice he, with a roll of his drum, delivers the decree of the magistrate in a voice more than usually hoarse and solemn. From the market-place he proceeds to each of the six quarters of the town, halting at intervals to repeat the joyous tidings and accompanied throughout his march by a band of frolicsome boys, who, though in great awe of the

drummer and his drumsticks, nevertheless, at a respectful distance, applaud and mimic his oratorical performance.

At length the anxiously looked for day arrives, and long before dawn a general emigration from the town takes place. Vehicles of every description laden with vats, casks and noisy children jolt over the rough stone pavements, their rattle informing us that the campaign against the myriads of elfin spirits hid in every bunch of grapes has commenced. The houses one and all send forth their full contingent, armed with baskets and provisions to swell the number of combatants. At sunrise an endless caravan, loud with laughing voices, overflows the mountains, leaving a wave of the mighty tide at every opening in the hedges; the remainder dashing on and on, till at last hill and dale are deluged with busy collectors. The diverse streams receive a considerable afflux from the mountaineers, who, owing to their elevated position, have no vine gardens of their own, and at this juncture, all the women and girls pour down to offer their labour for a few pence daily and their food. Wrapped from head to foot in a large white sheet, they form a striking contrast to the townspeople dressed in their gaudy-coloured apparel. In this way the vintage is heralded in, the sky spreading bright and blue over the rich hilly land

scape that reverberates with the merry sounds of the vintagers; a tinge of the first breath of autumn adding new charms to the luxuriant and picturesque scenery.

The moment a party enters a vineyard, there is a general rush upon the grapes amidst shouts and huzzas, and the luscious fruit peeping in dark-blue clusters from out the indented leaves is culled with childish glee and excitement. And not until a fair quantity has been consumed does the joyous task really commence. Grape picking is the especial business of the women and children, who cut off the bunches with a knife, collecting them in wooden vessels, and laying aside the finest for winter use. A number of men are employed in carrying the grapes in butts to a vat near the hut, where other men are engaged in bruising them with pronged poles, and loading the waggons with the mash to be carried off to the pressing houses. Wandering gipsy musicians tarry round the vintagers, rendering the scene still more animated by their lively performance. They are plentifully rewarded with grapes, which their wives and children gather into baskets. Neither do the beggars neglect the favourable opportunity, being well aware that men are in general inclined to be charitable when surrounded by plenty; and accordingly take up their position, where several roads meet, and chaunt

in plaintive accents some holy song to awaken sympathy in the hearts of the passers by. The stranger strolling over the mountains during this protracted festival, will be invited to enter the vineyards, and partake of the aromatic muscadine or the high flavoured rose-bud grape; or if it is noon to join the dinner of the vintagers, spread upon the grass in goodly dishes, containing mutton boiled in millet, and roasted pork with *Sour Kraut*. At nightfall the mountains glow with countless bonfires and sky rockets, and various fire works sparkle and explode in company with the boisterous jokes of the groups encamped around the blazing fires. Thus the night is spent alternately with music, dance and storytelling, until the following morning brings back the joys and labours of the past day.

In three weeks at the most the crops are all collected, and then the poorest class come in for their share, as they are allowed free access to the vineyards to glean the grapes overlooked during the gathering. The vintage is closed with several balls, in which priests and laymen partake with equal zeal and pleasure.

After the mash has been transferred to the press-house, it is trodden by men in perforated tubs, placed over the vats which are destined to hold the *Törköly*—bruised grapes—during the fermentation process. The must of the white grapes is only left

twenty-fours to ferment upon the stalks; it is then introduced into casks, whilst that of the black remains for ten or twelve days in the vats. The long contact with the husks gives the wine a deep ruby colour, and makes it the better for keeping; though the stalks impart an astringency to the juice, which, on that account, requires some years before it comes to its prime. The wine of a light red colour, called *Schiller*, is produced from black grapes, the must being removed to the vessels from the stalks after a day's fermentation. After the must is drained off the vats, the *Törköly* is subjected to a wooden press, a simple machine worked by one man. From the cakes a kind of brandy is distilled.

In particularly hot seasons, when many of the grapes turn to raisins on the vines, the dried berries, are picked off and put into wooden vessels apart. The thick juice, which of itself runs from them, is called Essence, and is kept as a rarity only to be used on festive occasions, and is never brought into the market. Then a good old wine is poured upon the berries from which the essence has been extracted, and left to stand for several days. This produces the celebrated beverage known under the name of Tokay.

In former times the officers of the bishop and chapter—the secular and spiritual lords of the

town—blocked up all the main thoroughfares leading from the mountains, to take the tenth of the produce as a ground tax, and another tenth as tithes. The Diet of 1848 having freed the land from all seigneurial and ecclesiastical imposts, the owner of vineyards came into full possession of his hitherto feudal tenure. Yet this happy state of affairs lasted but to the close of the war of independence. Then the old system was re-established with increased vigour, with this difference, however, that Austria has now stepped into the right of the former lords, and pockets the double tithes and tenths in money; for, in lieu of exacting the dues in kind, which hitherto fell lightly upon the producers, the Government demands payment of one florin for every *Ako* of wine produced, and another florin when sold or consumed. Some years since an *Ako* of common wine seldom fetched more than from two to three florins; it will, therefore, be easily understood that so immoderate a tax, amounting almost to one hundred per cent., presses most heavily upon the producers. The result is already felt, and in consequence the cultivation of the vine has in several districts greatly fallen off.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WESTERN BORDERS.

THERE was a time when the countries now so unnaturally conglomerated in the grasp of the double-headed Austrian eagle, each formed an independent and happy realm, under its own native prince; when the dukes of Austria, although emperors of Germany, possessed but a small strip of land on either bank of the Danube, bounded by Passau and Presburgh; when, unable to defend themselves against their neighbours, they lost even their hereditary possessions, and were living as fugitives on the bounty of one or other of their vassals in Germany.

The latter was particularly the case during the second moiety of the fifteenth century, when the Emperor Frederick IV., Duke of Austria, by his repeated invasions of the border countries of Hungary, whilst their sovereign, Matthias Corvinus, was engaged in a severe contest with Turkey, provoked the just resentment of that renowned king Matthias not only routed the Austrian forces, but

in a few months conquered Stiermark and Upper Austria, with all their fortresses, extending the boundaries of his realm to Tyrol and Bavaria, and taking up his residence at Vienna. The inhabitants of this city, dissatisfied with their duke for continually imposing new taxes on them, gladly submitted to the liberal and just sway of the Hungarian sovereign.

In order effectually to protect the borders against any future inroads of the Austrians, Matthias gave the adjacent countries a military organisation, distributing the woodlands along the frontiers amongst the most deserving veterans of his invincible Black Legion,* and bestowing on them the rights and privileges of noblemen, for which they, in time of emergency, were to lead the borderers of their district against the invading enemy.

The portion of the western frontiers where Matthias put this salutary measure into effect is formed partly by the Laitha river and partly by offshoots of the Styrian Alps, which assume gentler forms in their descent into the western counties. The

* The Black Legion was a corps of six thousand regular foot soldiers. Matthias organised them himself, and kept them in his pay, even in time of peace, as the *élite* of his army. This Legion mustered the bravest men, who with their irresistible charge often decided a victory. The king knew most of them by name.

mountain ranges are covered throughout with a verdant carpeting of many-shaped leaves and blades, and contain a variety of lovely, parklike landscapes.

The inhabitants along these borders are a branch of the great Teutonic family. They are called Hienzen, speak a corrupt dialect of the German, and are as simple, contented, industrious and peaceful as their brethren on Austrian territory, to whom in habits and costume they bear great affinity. Their small and modest villages nestle in secluded, romantic valleys, on the banks of some clear rivulet, abounding in trout and surrounded by forests of magnificent fir, beech and oak trees, with large clearings for agricultural purposes. Every church spire is there surmounted by a cock, a sign that the inhabitants at one time professed the tenets of the reformed church, till the wholesale and sanguinary conversions under Leopold I. left the people no choice but extirpation or Romanism. The Hienzen, in accordance with their unresisting nature, chose the latter, keeping, however, the cocks as mementoes upon their church spires, firmly believing that the time will yet come when those heralds of the dawn will again announce the advent of a lasting freedom of conscience. The ruins of castles and towers, which crown many a rocky projection and isolated mountain peak, still bear testimony to the fierce and desultory warfare

htat must have been carried on for centuries along the borders. Most of those strongholds played an important part at one or other period of the middle ages; each of them, as if reflecting a portion of the history of those barbarous times, possessing its tradition of a more or less stirring character.

There is, for example, the castle of Lockenhaus, in the lovely Gincz valley, once the property of the powerful Knight Templars, who, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, at the order of King Charles Robert, were extirpated in Hungary as well as in other countries. To the visitor of that ancient but still habitable building is shown, amongst other curiosities, the great hall, commonly called the "Hall of Blood," where the assembled brethren of the Temple were surprised and massacred by the troops of the king. The large dark spots on the stone pavement are said to be the innocent blood of the cavaliers, which, in spite of every effort to efface them, retain their reddish hue, as if to bear eternal witness of the cruelty perpetrated on them. Higher up in the mountains, the castle of Landsee rises above the surrounding country. One of its earlier possessors, in consequence of a fit of jealousy, caused his young and beautiful wife to be immured there. A few days afterwards, on being convinced of her innocence, he broke down the walls of her prison. But

his repentance came too late. Overwhelmed by incessant remorse for his foul deed, the husband made a vow to pass the remainder of his days as a hermit, in the very cell in which his wife had endured all the horrors of a death by starvation. In the vicinity of Landsee, upon a steep rocky summit, is the fortress of Forchtenstein, still in good preservation, wherein the vast family treasures of the princes of Eszterházy are guarded by a company of grenadiers kept in their pay.

The most picturesque and stately ruins in that neighbourhood are those of Kirchschlag, encircling the brow of a conical mountain projection, and overlooking a borough of the same name.

About half an hour distant from that place, in an easterly direction, stands an isolated tower on a granite block, its mossy walls partly hidden by lofty fir-trees. It was in former times one of the fortifications erected at the command of Matthias for the protection of the borders, and is situated on the left bank of a mountain rivulet, which, at that point, for several miles, forms the boundary between Hungary and Austria. This secluded spot is known as the "Grave of the Hungarian Girl," a name in harmony with its loneliness and solemn stillness. But the melancholy the place inspires is changed into painful sympathy by the tradition attached to it, the affecting episode of which invests

that otherwise unimportant ruin with an unfading interest, and at the same time connects its fate with that of the castle of Kirchschlag.

The facts, as they were narrated to us, are as follows: When Matthias established his line of defence, the land in the vicinity of the "Grave of the Hungarian Girl" fell to the share of Karol, a gallant officer in the Black Legion, who, after building a stronghold, settled there with his family and a dozen men-at-arms, clearing from the woodland as much ground for agricultural purposes as was necessary for their subsistence.

At that period the castle of Kirchschlag belonged to a powerful and wealthy Austrian magnate, the Count of Puchheim, who besides possessed several other castles and seigniories throughout the land. He was one of the favourities of Frederick IV., hating the Hungarians most heartily, and ravaging their country on every plausible opportunity. As he, however, waylaid and plundered not only Hungarians, but also his own countrymen, the people bestowed on him the denomination of the Knight of Evil.

Puchheim was a widower, having an only son, Rudolf, a youth of a noble disposition, who, the very reverse of his father, abhorred his nightly revels and predatory excursions. He, therefore, as often as he could, withdrew from the banqueting

at Kirchschlag, and, taking his bow and arrows, rode out to hunt in the forests of his father's dominions, which to the present day abound in deer.

One summer evening, as he bent his way homewards along the winding course of a brook, his ear caught the tones of a female voice, singing the *Ave Maria* with touching sweetness, whilst the evening bell for prayer tolled from the castle. With surprise and curiosity, Rudolf followed the sound, and after a short walk at a sudden turn of the path, behind an overhanging cliff he discovered a scene of peculiar interest. On the deep bank of the purling streamlet, which there formed a clear miniature bay, a maiden of uncommon loveliness knelt upon the green turf, teaching her little sister the melody of that evening prayer, her countenance lighted up with an expression of childlike piety. The group was charming, but still more so the songstress, who, in the first bloom of youth, looked the very picture of innocence and beauty. The scene produced a marvellous effect upon the young Count, who tarried there, lost in contemplation. Suddenly he was accosted by a warrior of imposing appearance, who, on learning the name of the stranger, introduced him to his daughter Gizela, inviting him at the same time, as a good neighbour, to his house.

Karol led his guest and children up a flight of stairs rudely hewn in the rock to a spacious clearing, where round a massive watch-tower stood several huts, surrounded by a plot of arable land, the whole inclosed by a rampart and ditch. There, on Hungarian ground, Rudolf enjoyed the hospitality of the simple but true-hearted inhabitants, giving himself up wholly to the uncontrollable emotions which the presence of the commander's eldest daughter had called forth in his young and susceptible heart. The friendly wish of the host, that the young Count should repeat his visit, was a welcome pretext for his coming again and again to the Hungarian settlement; till at last he felt that he could not exist one day without listening to that voice which thrilled through his every nerve—without seeing those features that reminded him of a picture of a guardian angel in the castle chapel of Kirchschlag. When unable any longer to resist the force of his love, he revealed the state of his heart to Gizela, whose affection he already possessed. They mutually plighted their faith, and the father of the maiden blessed their betrothal. The youthful lovers enjoyed their happiness with a feeling of perfect security and content, caring little within their own fairy circle for the egotistical schemes of the outer world; where, however, the storm was already gathering which

was destined soon to annihilate all their hopes of happiness.

Among the garrison at the watch-tower was a youth, by birth a German, whom Karol, when a boy, had rescued from destruction at the storming of an Austrian fortress. From that time the warrior kept him in his family as a playmate for Gizela. The youth conceived a violent passion for the maiden; his suit, however, having been rejected, his love changed into hatred, to which the success of the young Count added intensity. His keen, jealous eye detected, without much difficulty, the cause of Rudolf's daily visits, and on remarking the progress he made in the maiden's favour, the ungrateful miscreant, forgetting the numerous marks of kindness bestowed upon him by the family of his benefactor, resolved to betray the secret of the lovers to Rudolf's father. He accordingly hastened to the castle, and informed Count Puchheim how affairs were going on in the Hungarian watch-tower. The wrath of the haughty magnate was terrible. Besides his hatred against Hungary, he felt the pride of his order and the prejudices of his country deeply wounded by the conduct of his son. In order at once to put a stop to his youthful folly, as he deemed it, he informed him that two weeks from that day he was to wed the daughter of a neighbouring cavalier.

At this intimation Rudolf felt that the crisis of his fate was at hand. Fully aware of the uselessness of openly opposing his father's will or of imploring his pity, he withdrew apparently satisfied, and rode over to Karol to communicate to him the sad intelligence. The warrior knew of only one way to surmount the mighty obstacle, and that was, to go without delay to King Matthias at Vienna, from whose justice and humanity he promised the most satisfactory result. When the day for their setting out was once fixed, the betrothed quickly forgot their troubles, and now began to look upon their dreams of a glowing future as already realised.

Although the preparations for the journey were made with great precaution, still the Austrian traitor's suspicions were aroused, and no sooner were they confirmed than he again hastened to Kirchschlag, imparting the fresh tidings to the Count, who was just then making merry with several boon companions. Heated by wine and passion, Puchheim swore, in the presence of his guests, to prepare a suitable nuptial couch for his Hungarian daughter-in-law.

It was the evening before the day of departure. Rudolf and Gizela had visited, for the last time, all the places so endeared to them by a thousand sweet remembrances. Before entering the dwell-

ing, they lingered at a lovely spot not far from the ramparts, casting a farewell look on the glorious mountain scenery, bathed in the rosy hue of approaching twilight. Lost in silent revery, and overwhelmed by an inexplicable feeling of sadness, they did not remark that darkness had gradually spread over valley and mountain.

As the girl leant on his shoulder, Rudolf, all on a sudden, felt her whole frame shudder violently. The next moment she sank, with a faint shriek, into his arms, her breast pierced by an arrow, and her heart's blood gushing in a warm stream over her lover, who, in a paroxysm of mingled agony and madness, sprang forward towards a thicket from whence the deadly missile was shot. Perceiving the figure of a man moving off stealthily, Rudolf, with a bound, fell upon him, and in mute rage plunged his dagger repeatedly into the breast of the murderer.

The catastrophe soon became known at the settlement, and Karol hastened with lighted torches to the spot, from whence two bodies were carried into the fortification; one was Rudolf's father, the Count of Puchheim, and the other the victim of his vengeance, the gentle Gizela, lovely even with the impress of death on her pallid cheeks. The former still lived, and spent his last breath in cursing his son, who stood aghast between the

corpses of those whom he most loved and venerated upon earth.

Gizela was buried near the tower. Her tragic fate awakened so much sympathy that the people immortalised her memory by giving the place the name already mentioned.

The bereaved father left the mournful spot, and settled farther eastward in the Rabnitz Valley, where the village of Karl now stands.

Rudolf broken-hearted joined the war in the East against the Infidels, from whence he never returned. He was the last of the direct line of the Puchheims. The castle became deserted, and left gradually to fall into ruins. Tradition does not mention whether the author of so much misery received the deserved punishment for his treachery.

It is scarcely surprising, that events such as these, shrouded in antiquity and the changing garb of oral tradition, the farther they recede from the present, the more supernatural they appear to the people, who, in their unenlightened state, dwell upon them with a feeling of superstitious awe, fully convinced that passions so powerful could not be extinguished with the life of the actors, but, for a certain period, animate them even after death. Thus the inhabitants in the vicinity of Kirchschlag firmly believe that at midnight they can distinctly hear the tramping of Rudolf's horse, as he

gallops up the mountain ridge that separates the castle from the watch-tower, to visit the grave of his betrothed, where he lingers until the crowing of the cock calls him back to his distant resting-place.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SZEKLERS.

In that part of the Carpathian Mountains, which towards Moldavia forms the eastern boundaries of Transylvania, a tribe of hardy mountaineers have dwelt from time immemorial, who differ entirely from the neighbouring races, and have in their seclusion behind those lofty bulwarks retained much of their primitive originality. This tribe bears the name of Széklers. There exists no authentic record of the period when they took possession of their present abode, neither of the place from whence they came; this much only is certain, that in the ninth century, when the Magyars conquered Transylvania, the Széklers had for generations already been established there. As their language, appearance, and manners bespoke their Magyar origin, they were granted equal liberties and right of possession with the conquerors, and had the charge of defending the frontiers against hostile incursions. Hence the love of liberty and a warlike spirit are the most

prominent traits in the character of the Széklers. Their numbers amount to about 300,000, and their land extends over 4000 square miles, which like the Hungarian counties is divided into districts, of which there are five. Here, as on the southern borders, Austria encroached upon the constitutional independence of the people by severing a tract along the frontiers from the mother country, and subjecting it, in spite of the sturdy resistance of the inhabitants and the protest of the Diet, to a military organisation. The tract thus separated contains three districts, and furnishes the Austrian army with two regiments of foot and one of hussars.

The land of the Széklers is intersected by high mountain ridges covered with primeval forests, which in many parts have scarcely ever resounded with the strokes of the axe. Hundreds of rapid torrents rush down the precipitous ravines and rocky glens, which suddenly inundate the lower valleys after a storm in the mountains, and in their destructive course deposit masses of rock and earth, to the detriment of the agriculturist. The Széklers have therefore to contend with the elements as well as with an uncertain climate; their industry and perseverance have nevertheless prevailed, and every plot of ground where the plough or spade have found their way has been changed into

a waving corn field or a luxuriant vineyard; so that the cultivated portion of the country bears a garden-like aspect.

The Széklers have not alone outstripped all the other races of Transylvania in their husbandry; but have likewise left them considerably behind in point of intellectual culture, the prevailing religion, the Protestant, having exercised a mighty influence on the education of the people. There is not a village but boasts a good school, and few Széklers are to be found who cannot read their Bible and write their name. Another great advantage is that the Protestant clergy and schoolmasters are selected and well provided for by their respective communities, and thus all of them are men of superior information, acquired in the universities of England and Germany. Amongst their public institutions for gratuitous instruction is the Protestant College at Maros Vásárhely, the Capital of the Széklerland, with an average of scholars amounting yearly to about 800. The college possesses a magnificent public library, presented by Count Teleki, which contains not less than 100,000 volumes.

The Széklers are sober, hospitable and devotedly attached to their country, and when abroad suffering, like the Swiss, from the *mal du pays*. This is in no way surprising when we consider the mani-

fold beauties and wonders of nature that surround them from the cradle to the grave. Whether on the mountain heights tending their flocks, or wending their way over the valley slopes, where their towns and villages lie scattered in picturesque groups, or wandering amidst the rocky giants, towering above their heads; at every turn they are greeted by new scenes of a grand and imposing character, which produce an impression upon them that neither time nor distance can efface. In the bowels of the mountains many an unexplored vein of precious metals awaits the pickaxe of the miner, particles of which are continually washed away in the brooks and rivers, almost uncared for by the people. There are likewise entire rocks of salt, which from a distance look not unlike the Glaciers, and whose waters encrust all the objects with which they come in contact with crystals of salt. In most cases the peasant has to dig but a few inches below the surface in order to come upon a layer of that useful article. But this he only ventures to do clandestinely, salt being the monopoly of the Government, and one of its most productive sources of revenue. Castle ruins adorn several of the rocky projections, and the stupendous caverns, frequently found beneath the mountains, contain fine specimens of stalactites of fantastic or regular architectural form. In these caverns it is not

unusual to meet with mineral and hot springs, with which the whole country abounds.

To the influence of such sublime natural beauties may be attributed the Széklers' lively imagination, and their talent for improving as well as their disposition to clothe the minor incidents of their village life with an air of poetry and romance. As an illustration thereof we will give a description of their courtships and marriages. The former commences by the youth presenting himself on a Saturday evening at the girl's window, when he discloses his sentiments either through the medium of his shalm or a song of his own composition. The following Sunday he singles her out at the dance as the object of his marked attention, and sings in praise of her beauty and good qualities. Is the girl disposed to lend a gracious ear to his proposals, she presents him with a bouquet on his next appearance at her window; after which the successful suitor takes an early opportunity of sending a deputation of his friends, usually headed by his father, to make her acquaintance. On that occasion they partake of a repast cooked by the girl, as a guarantee of her culinary powers. If the friends are favourably impressed, they renew their visit at the end of three days, and in the name of the lover ceremoniously solicit her hand. This time the conversation is carried on in verse, re-

sponded to by the cleverest of the girl's female relatives, who sound her praise in quaint rhythmical discourse. After several jugs of wine have been emptied the girl's father gives his consent to the marriage. Three days previous to the wedding, the *Sirató este*—evening of weeping—takes place at the house of the *fiancée*, whereat all her relations assemble and weep over her approaching separation from the family circle. When once the *Sirató este* has been celebrated the engagement is considered as indissoluble, and the youth repairs to the nearest town to purchase the bridal gifts, consisting of a large shawl, a pair of boots and a black cap; the girl in return buying for her betrothed a white calico shirt, a pocket-handkerchief embroidered with red and a black neckcloth.

The day preceding the wedding two *Hivogatók*—inviters—their hats decked with large nosegays, and their hazelnut sticks with ribbons, go from house to house inviting the villagers in rhythmical sayings to the marriage. On the wedding-day the *Vöfélyek*—bridemen—proceed in state to the girl's house to receive her from her parents. At first the father cannot be found, and the *Vöfélyek* express their astonishment, remarking that as there is no church without a priest, there can be no house without a master. Whereon he appears and inquires the object of their visit. "We have heard,"

says one of the *Vöfélys*, "that in this house there is a sweet dove, and we are come to carry it away to a golden cage, where it shall be fed with the finest wheat." The father agrees, and the *Vöfélyek* hasten to the bridegroom's, and return with him followed by the wedding guests and a band of gipsy musicians. While the party rest in the courtyard the *Vöfélyek*, in pursuance of their arduous duty, enter the house to claim the promised dove. The father eagerly brings forth an old woman from the adjoining room, asking whether that is the bird they seek? The *Vöfélyek* protest that they will not accept such a scarecrow, and that, having evidently mistaken the house, they will at once proceed in quest of the real bird. But on being pressed to remain they consent, and after the master has repeated the joke the pretty bride is led forward by her mother and delivered up to the *Vöfélyek*, who forthwith hand her over to the two bridemaids. The latter then assist at her marriage toilette, taking good care to make it as gaudy as possible. The *Vöfélyek* carry the joyous tidings of their success to the assembled party, who to fill up the time had been doing ample justice to a plentiful breakfast. Now ensues the conquest of the bride's *Parafernums*—paraphernalia—consisting of cattle, bedding, clothing, and all kinds of kitchen utensils, which the weary *Vöfélyek* have to obtain from the

mother by dint of rhythmical persuasions. At length all preliminaries having been brought to a close, the guests mount their carts and steeds, and set out for the church together with the bride and bridegroom, who occupy separate conveyances decked out with flowers, and the horses with ribbons and gay cloths. At every bridge over which the procession passes the bridegroom has to pay a ransom, which is given to the musicians. After the ceremony the party returns amidst music, song, and huzzahs, to the bride's house, where her long plaits of hair are turned up under a cap, after the fashion of the married women. The bride then hides behind a curtain with her companions, and the bridegroom, ere he can claim her as his own, has to single her out blindfolded from amongst them. If he does not at once succeed, he is compelled to redeem her from her attendants in the shape of a handsome present.

Meanwhile several women have for hours been occupied on a long hearth, erected in the yard, in cooking various viands in large earthenware pots and pans; and now the marriage feast is served up. Whilst the guests are regaling themselves, it is the province of the *Vőfélyek* to hold a dialogue in verse by way of entertaining them, in which they humorously portray the advantages and disadvantages of married life. After dinner the com-

pany repair to the bridegroom's, where dancing immediately ensues. At midnight the *Párna táncz* —bolster dance—takes place, accompanied by a slow melancholy air, which closes by the bride-maids leading the bride to the door of the nuptial chamber. Dancing is then renewed and continues throughout the night. The next morning a carriage accompanied by the musicians is sent to convey the parents to their daughter's new home. On their arrival there is a fresh outbreak of merry-making, which is vigorously kept up till evening, and concluded by the *Vőfélyek* collecting money in a pan for the benefit of the musicians. On the subsequent day the guests who attended the marriage send presents in poultry, hams, linen, &c., to the house of the newly wedded pair.

On Whit Sunday the most beautiful girl in each community is chosen as the Queen of Pentecost, and led by the young men round the village landmarks, to make her acquainted with the confines of her dominions. The queen has many prerogatives at the dance and in the spinning-room, and her sway, as a matter of custom, is obeyed by the juvenile part of the community, at least as far as it concerns the bright side of their social life.

When one of the richer landed proprietors has any out-door work to be done in as short time as possible—for example, the cutting and housing of

his crops—he mounts a band of musicians on a cart, which is driven through the village, and from which his steward proclaims that his master invites all the inhabitants to a *Kaláka*—mutual labour party—on the following day. The summons is usually attended by a goodly number of men and women armed with sickles, who, headed by the band, betake themselves to the fields and amidst music and song complete their appointed task. In the evening they escort the heavily-laden waggons home, and partake of the repast prepared for them in the courtyard, which is the only reward the musically-convened labourers receive.

Notwithstanding the influence of education, the Széklers still cling to various superstitions, the more difficult to eradicate as many of them are connected with local traditions. Amongst others there is one attached to a rocky peak near Vasláb, where, according to popular prejudice, the witches assemble at new moon to hold communion with the evil spirits. On these occasions their shadowy forms may be descried flitting to and fro along the edge of the precipitous cliff, by looking through a hole in a piece of wood taken from an old coffin in the cemetery, which hole must be bored by a gimlet made of coffin nails.

In Catholic communities there is a prevalent belief in the return of the ghosts of the departed who

have left their worldly affairs unsettled, or wish to be released from purgatory. They are said to appear at midnight, announcing themselves to their family by noises of different kinds; and if there is any one courageous enough to make inquiries of the supernatural visitors, they likewise disclose their behests. To ascertain their present condition, it is customary to strew ashes on the floor of the room over which they are most likely to pass. Human footprints denote them to be in a state of bliss; while web or cloven feet are a sign that they are undergoing a purifying process in the nether regions. A ghost, if to no one else, is at any rate a harbinger of good to the *curé*, who, as the spiritual keeper of his flock, is paid for masses for its repose, which he continues to celebrate until the nocturnal visitor has ceased his wanderings.

The land of the Széklers, though protected by high ranges of mountains and narrow passes, has nevertheless the disadvantage of being encompassed by two other races, the Saxons and the Wallacks; who, numerically, are four times as strong as the Széklers and entertain an hereditary dislike to them. Those hostile races not alone form a living wall between this tribe and their brethren the Magyars, but in the event of a national movement, menace them with total destruction. This was particularly the case in 1848, when

the Saxons and Wallacks, conjointly with the Austrians, made desperate efforts to invade their land. Had not the Széklers been warned in time of the magnitude of the danger, and thus taken early defensive measures, they must doubtless have succumbed, and shared the fate of the inhabitants of the other districts of Transylvania, where the burning of hundreds of towns and villages, and the massacre of the Hungarians, sufficiently proved that the war which Austria had kindled between the races was one of extirpation.

In this emergency the Széklers rose *en masse*, and led by their heroic chiefs, amongst whom the most prominent was Colonel Gál Sándor, they valiantly stood at bay in defence of their household gods. As the danger increased corps after corps was organised and sent to the assistance of General Bem; and, while the youths were conquering the Austrians and Russians in the plains, the old men battled with the enemy at their own doors. The want of arms and ammunition they provided for by erecting powder-mills, foundries, and gun manufactories; and as they had no metal for the founding of cannon, they took down the bells from the churches wherewith to peal a death knell in the hostile camps. The women and children busied themselves in making cartridges, preparing linen and lint, and attending the wounded. All had a part to perform in the

great and exciting drama. In the hour of need the energies of the people eminently developed themselves in the planning and use of the means of defence. One in particular, of the name of Aron Gábor, a simple uneducated peasant, gained undying fame by his practical genius. Having passed ten years as a sub-officer in the Austrian artillery service, he returned to his mountain-home and made himself conspicuous by his skill in the manufacture of agricultural implements. At the outbreak of hostilities he constructed a model of a cannon, and, although laughed at by many, actually founded a six-pounder. It was the first cannon the Széklers had ever called their own. With it Aron Gábor hastened to the battle-field, where he arrived just in time to give a favourable turn to the combat. He himself pointed and fired the gun; and great was the enthusiasm of the spectators when the ball went on loudly whistling its death song amongst the ranks of the enemy. The acquisition of guns of their own manufacture gave the Széklers immense confidence in carrying on the war. After the first successful attempt a battery of six guns was quickly constructed under the guidance of the indefatigable Aron Gábor, who was successively promoted to the rank of major, and intrusted with the management of the arsenals. Several batteries left his workshops, till

not a bell remained in the spires to announce to the heroic people the last storm that burst over their doomed country, the invasion of the Russians. Hemmed in on all sides, and from the East attacked by thirty thousand Cossacks, the Széklers in scattered bands still kept up the unequal contest with an energy almost superhuman, until the surrender of Világos made all farther efforts of no avail.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CROATS.

WHEN the Hungarian horsemen first watered their steeds, a thousand years since, in the floods of the Drave, they found the ancestors of the Croats already established there, forming part of a Sclavonian confederation, which, under the protectorate of the Greek emperors, extended likewise over Bosnia and Servia. But the aggression of their protectors soon compelled the Croats to curry favour with the Hungarians, who not alone freed them from the yoke of the Greeks, but admitted them as well to all the municipal and political immunities which they themselves enjoyed. As long as Hungary possessed her own innate sovereigns, Croatia, under the ægis of a common independence, was one of her most thriving provinces, having been sufficiently shielded, by a strong and liberal Government, against the attacks of all external enemies. A long series of calami-

ties for both countries commenced on the accession of the Hapsburgs to the Hungarian throne. Under the misrule of that race, Croatia was exposed to incessant inroads from the Turks, and in several districts entirely depopulated. In order to re-people the land, Leopold I., towards the end of the seventeenth century, invited all the outlaws —who had formed themselves into organised bands along the borders, alternately ravaging both the Turkish and Hungarian territories—to settle there for the protection of the latter. This invitation was accepted by a great number of those desperadoes, to whom the king assigned a large tract of waste borderland, severing it, politically, for ever from the mother country: at the same time subjecting the settlers to strict military regulations. Thus the foundation was laid for a system which, though salutary in its first results, at a later period proved highly detrimental to civil freedom. This system was arbitrarily extended over the entire southern and eastern frontiers of Hungary; and when there were no longer any infidels to contend with, the arms of the Grenzers were turned against all the popular barriers that obstructed the progress of absolutism.

Croatia, including the provinces called Sclavonia and Syrmium, has a territorial extent of 13,850 square miles, with nearly 2,000,000 inhabitants,

who, with few exceptions, belong to the Roman Catholic faith; the Protestants being, by a special statute, prohibited from establishing themselves within the precincts of those provinces. The land is divided, politically, into two parts; the larger comprising the Military Borders, and the smaller the Provincial Territories. These are again subdivided: the former into eleven Regimental Districts, under the command of two Military Boards; and the latter into six Counties, each of which, at least prior to 1849, was governed by freely-elected civil authorities. The entire land is intersected by many mountain ranges, which, to the south, rise to a considerable height, ever and anon broken by wild, barren glens, yet towards the river Drave, Save and the Lower Danube, sloping down into softer forms, clad with vines and luxuriant foliage; the beech and oak forests affording abundant provision for countless herds of swine. Here and there the ground is perfectly level, and the land extremely fertile. Hence, whilst the Mountaineers have to contend with many disadvantages of a rough climate and sterile soil, the Lowlanders enjoy the almost spontaneous blessings of nature. Among their various fruit, the late plums, both for quantity and delicacy, deserve mention. Every house and farm possesses large plots of plum-trees, and even the roads, for miles, are skirted by them.

From their abundant produce a fine kind of brandy, *Slivovicza*, is distilled. The red wines of Syrmium are likewise celebrated for sweetness and flavour; the Roman emperor, Probus, having in the third century first introduced the growth of vines there, near the town of Mitrovitz.

The Sclavonian tribes of Croatia are as different in appearance, character, and manners, as the country they inhabit and the occupations they pursue. The Mountaineers have lofty statures, dark complexions, fiery eyes, long plaited hair and black bushy beards. They are still a set of uncultivated savages, sullen, passionate and revengeful; redoubted in time of war less for true valour than for ferocity and love of plunder. Baron Trenck, the leader of the famous corps of Croatian volunteers called Pandurs, recruited part of his terrible bands from these mountains, and led them, during the Austrian war of succession under Maria Theresa, against the enemies of the Austrian empire. Clad in Turkish fashion with the fez and loose red mantle, and carrying the horse tail and crescent instead of colours, they went forth leaving a cursed memory wherever they set foot, from the dire crimes they committed on defenceless people. The populace of Bavaria as well as that along the Rhine, retain a traditional horror of their barbarous deeds; so much so, that even to this day

they frighten their children into obedience by calling out, "Hush, the Pandurs are coming!"

The Grenzer of Licca, the wildest amongst the mountain tribes, wears a fez, a tight-fitting black or green jacket, green trousers, red mantle and sandals of untanned hide, which are used throughout the country. His chest, both in summer and winter is left uncovered. The whole of his attire, even his linen, is richly ornamented with embroidery, braid of bright colours, and innumerable buttons and rings of silver or zinc. In his leather belt he carries his inseparable companions, a brace of pistols, together with a knife, his pipe and cartridge-box. His chief weapon is a long, old-fashioned gun, inlaid with silver, like those of the Turks. The women are tall, but too robust and masculine, both in appearance and bearing, to be called beautiful. The principal part of their dress is a long linen gown, of ample proportions, drawn in at the waist with a girdle, and embroidered at every seam. From their shoulders hangs a short cloth mantle, and on the head they wear a cap of a flat or pointed form, over which they throw a black veil. The neck they adorn with rows of buttons, and in their girdle, like the men, they carry pistols and knives. Among their many strange customs, the most peculiar is the mode of marking their married or single state by the colour of their

stockings; the maidens wearing white, the married women red, and the widows blue.

Several villages in the mountains near the coast are inhabited by Uskoks, descendants of pirates, who rendered themselves famous during their desultory warfares against the Republic of Venice, and who even now surpass their neighbours in ferocity of disposition.

In the wildest and loneliest part of the Croatian Mountains—the Great Capella range—lies the small village of Plaski, the birthplace of Omer Pasha. It belongs to the regimental district of Ogulin, where his father, Baron Littas, then held the rank of Captain. Omer Pasha was born in 1801, and brought up from childhood for the military profession, which he embraced with great ardour, and in his twentieth year entered one of the Grenzer regiments as lieutenant. In consequence, however, of some quarrel with his colonel, he suddenly left the Austrian service, and went to Turkey. There, having changed both his name and faith, he offered his sword in defence of the Crescent. His offer was accepted, and he rose rapidly, signalising himself by his conspicuous military abilities; and now, in his fifty-third year, he fills the highest and most important post in that realm after his sovereign, the Sultan.

On descending the mountain slopes, both the

climate and people gradually become more genial; and in the low countries, principally in Provincial Croatia, the meagre faces of the people bear an expression of gentleness and good-nature. Their apparel, also, undergoes a considerable change. The men wear broad-brimmed Hungarian hats, wide linen drawers and shirts, with the addition in winter of trousers of a thick white cloth, black great coats—*Gunyatz*—ornamented with small pieces of cloth of gay colours, and a large rug or a sheepskin—*Bunda*. The *Torba* completes their outer man. It is a leather pouch slung across the shoulder, and their constant companion by day and night. In it they keep their provisions, pipes, and, above all, the never-failing flask of brandy—*Rakie*—of which both sexes are passionately fond.

Alike in the low countries as in the mountains the women's chief attire is a loose linen gown, fastened with a leather girdle round the waist, and falling in a thousand folds below the knees. The upper part of this garment forms a very novel sort of larder; the owner, in default of pockets, stowing in it a variety of eatables, such as cakes, bacon, sausages, fruit, &c., with which, on leaving their dwellings, they invariably provide themselves, in order to regale the friends whom they may chance to meet. A broad flat cap, or red kerchief, worn in the Turkish fashion as a turban, forms their

usual head-gear; the neck and girdle they deck with gold or copper coins and buttons, and the fingers with as many rings of silver or zinc as they can conveniently squeeze on to them. They are extremely fond of painting their faces; their cosmetics, which they begin to use as early as fourteen, are a preparation of vegetable matter.

The domestic life of the Croats, in most respects, bears the impress of primitive simplicity; the family affairs being conducted in a patriarchal style by a chief, who manages the property much in the same way as the early Christian communities did.

Neither the civilian peasant nor the Grenzer divide their landed property among their children; the former from habit, and the latter from the fact that he is solely the farmer of government. Hence both, though from different motives, resort to the same expedient of keeping their increasing families together in order to carry on the cultivation of their united possessions.

A farmer's dwelling, when first constructed, contains but a large hall, to which, whenever a member of the family marries, a small hut is annexed, consisting of a single room, which is fitted up as a sleeping apartment. The dwellings are built of logs or raw bricks, and covered with the dry bark of the lime-tree. It is no rare occurrence to find from ten to twelve families of fifty or sixty

members united in a house of this description, which looks not very unlike an enormous beehive. The chief of such a community is the Gospodar, or master, who is elected for life to that dignity by the male members. His patriarchal sway is unhesitatingly obeyed, and, in case of need, even supported by the authorities. The Gospodar has the uncontrolled management of the extensive husbandry; he provides for the necessities of his people, and dispenses the labour between the men; whilst the wife's office is to guide the internal affairs, and to superintend the females in their varied occupations. At the close of every year, the Gospodar makes up the accounts in the simplest way possible; that is to say, from a notched stick; the men receiving the surplus in equal proportions, and the females their share in presents of dresses or finery. Besides the common property, each member or family may possess as much individually as they can save or earn by extra labour. They may likewise separate from the parent stem at discretion, and settle in farms of their own. This privilege, however, is seldom exercised, partly from being accustomed from childhood to the former mode of life, and partly from the conviction that by living together they spare a considerable amount of work, and more easily produce the necessaries of life.

Although the great hall—the centre of these Croatian beehives—is properly the dwelling-room of the Gospodar, yet it is likewise, at certain times, at the disposal of the community at large, who in summer take their meals in it; and in winter, when compelled by the intense cold to seek shelter within doors, old and young congregate round the enormous stove, well supplied with mighty logs, and listen, when the day's work is over, to tales of witches and ghosts, in which Sclavonian imagination delights. On cold nights the married people transfer their beds from their unheated rooms into the great hall, where they are placed in a row along the walls; the younger and unmarried members accommodating themselves in the kitchen, stables and barns.

Scarcely acquainted even from hearsay with the refinements of civilised life, the Croats are extremely simple in their habits, and have but few wants, and these they contrive to reduce to a still narrower compass to suit their naturally idle inclinations. Notwithstanding the salubrity of the climate and the riches of the soil, they and their houses not unfrequently look as if suffering from a seven years' famine. The furniture of their rooms is scanty and of a rude kind; the great hall containing but a large earthenware oven, a long table, several benches, and a collection of gaudy pictures of

Saints hung upon the walls. In the bedroom there is nothing save a bedstead and a weaving-loom. The kitchen is still more destitute of conveniences. There you find scarcely any utensils but a large iron kettle suspended over the fire, which is kindled on the ground; and so far do they carry their indolence, that, instead of chopping up their wood, they push the entire trunk of a tree through the kitchen-door on to the fire, and whilst one end is burning away, the other is still in the yard. The spacious chimneys are the best provided part of the house; for there, during the whole year, hangs a good supply of pork, bacon and sausages for smoking; forming an inexhaustible and almost the sole stock of provisions of a Croatian peasant. Of outbuildings there are but few; since the grain, until trodden out by horses, which they employ instead of thrashing, is kept in stacks, and the cattle and horses remain throughout the year in the fields and forests under temporary sheds.

The expenses of a Croatian household are, of course, very few, the food and clothing being the produce of their own industry. The finery and extra garments occasionally purchased are of a cheap kind, and descend from parent to child. A workman of any trade is seldom, if ever, employed upon a farm; the male members all being expert masons, as well as carpenters and wheelwrights. They

build their own dwellings and carts, using as little iron as possible in their construction. Their wealth consists of cattle of all kinds, particularly swine. The horses are almost as small as ponies, but full of fire, and very fleet. They are harnessed four in a row, in such worn and torn trappings that one might well imagine they had already been employed in dragging the wooden horse of the Greeks into the doomed city of Troy. Bees are likewise kept in a very primitive fashion. The beehive, made of willow twigs, is plastered inside and out with a layer of cow-dung, and placed with its busy inmates on the bare ground. When it is filled with honey, a hole is dug beneath the hive, and the bees continue their work, as the Latin poet says: *Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes.** In several parts of the country, the culture of silk-worms prevails, forming a considerable part of the earnings of the population.

The idle propensities of the men, however, are fully redeemed by the industry and dexterity of the women. The latter not only perform all the duties of the house, dairy and garden; but even feed the cattle and horses, cleaning and harnessing the latter; while the men never stir till the women hand them the whip, which is the signal that the carts are ready.

* You bees, you collect honey, yet not for your own use.

These, however, are only a part of their occupations: they provide all the men's clothing, except the hat and sandals; shear the sheep; dye, spin, and weave the wool or hemp; cut out the cloth or linen, which they then fashion into the required articles of dress; so that it rests only with the men to put on the ready-made garments after their indispensable partners have even combed their hair. As we have stated, there is a weaving-loom in every bedroom, at which one or other of the inmates is continually employed, throwing the shuttle to and fro with marvellous skill and rapidity.

As the *Torba*, or pouch, is the never-failing companion of the men, so is the distaff that of the women. Wherever they go, they invariably carry it with them in their girdle, their fingers being constantly employed in turning the spindle and drawing out the thread. In knitting and embroidery they likewise excel: every part of their dress is more or less tastefully ornamented with the latter, either in wool or gold.

The favourite food of the Croats is pork and milk. Their bread, although they grow wheat in abundance, is made of maize or hirse, *panicum malacum*.

The patriarchal authority of the Gospodar extends also to the marriages, which are arranged in the following manner: First, the two Gospodars hold a consultation as to the price of the girl, to be

paid in cattle; and when they have agreed upon the terms, they ask the young people if they love each other. The answer, when in the affirmative, is considered as an official pledge of their mutual acceptance, and from that moment, whenever the affianced see each other in public, they dare not exchange a word or a look, but must turn round and fly, as though smitten, not with love, but with the plague. So it goes on till the parties meet at one of the church aisles in the vicinity, on which occasion a fair is always held; when at a general meeting of the friends and relations rings are exchanged. After this public betrothal, the lass has the right of choosing and buying at the expense of her future father-in-law all the articles of finery for her wedding, which are not a few and of the most gaudy description. On their return home the Gospodar, in the name of the *fiancé*, sends the girl an apple filled with gold or silver coins, which form the chief part of her dowry. Besides the cattle he has to present each member of her family with a gift, usually of wearing apparel; this sometimes making a greater drain upon his purse, than even the apple with its costly contents.

On the wedding-day the procession sets out to the church, headed by a clown, mounted upon the worst hack that can be found, and clad half in male and half in female attire, his hat decorated

with the wing of a goose. This post is always filled by the wittiest and merriest person in the neighbourhood, who is expected to entertain the company with his droll sallies. After the clown comes the bride, accompanied only by one female friend; then follows the bridegroom on horseback, carrying a nosegay, and wearing a cloak which, according to custom, was thrown over his shoulders at the bride's house, and surrounded by a troop of mounted comrades. In the church a canopy is prepared for the bride and bridegroom, and during the ceremony two crowns of silver-gilt, or bronze, are held above their heads. The priest, having offered up a prayer, first takes the man's crown, saying, as he places it upon his head: "I crown thee, servant of God, for the maiden N—." He then takes the girl's crown, and proceeds in a similar manner. With that the ceremony is concluded, and the procession, with the newly-wedded pair wearing their crowns, returns to the house of the bridegroom, where the wedding is celebrated with feasting and dancing, which last for three days and nights or longer, until the numerous guests have emptied both cellar and larder as completely as if a swarm of locusts had swept over them. The morning after the marriage the bride carries the water for washing to the guests, on which occasion she receives a gift from each.

The music of the Croats is the bagpipe; and their national dance, *Kolo*, is simply turning round in a large circle, which is joined by all persons present, who, in order to keep their places, take hold of each other's girdles. The performers wheel round, or move quickly backwards and forwards, keeping time with the music, and singing or rather howling one of their national melodies; the rings and coins hanging from their garments chinking, as they move, like so many spurs.

In Croatia the good old custom of celebrating every particular event, such as birthdays, baptisms, deaths, &c., by a feast, is still in full vigour. As they are, however, rather expensive affairs, the prudent Gospodar manages to keep several at the same time. This is most practicable in the case of a christening, which rite is seldom performed until the births of two or more children have taken place in one family. The names given to their offspring are selected less from the calendar of Saints than from the vocabulary of affection or of nature. Names such as *Milosh*, Darling; *Lubitza*, Beloved; *Jagoda*, Strawberry, are usually chosen.

At their feasts the Gospodar drinks to the health of the guests one by one, and every time in a bumper. It is a matter of courtesy, on the part of the entertained, to empty their glasses after each health; which of course brings about the na-

tural consequence, that a very few veterans are left on Bacchus' battle-field to do honour to those who come last, as most of the combatants are by that time disabled for farther effective service on that day.

Another of their peculiar customs is that of going to the cemeteries on Easter Monday, attended by their priests, where, for an hour or more, they pray for the souls of the departed. Many bring the wardrobe of a deceased relative with them, and, whilst laying the garments one by one upon the grave, exclaim amidst tears and lamentations: "Oh, why did you leave us so soon? your clothes are still good: they would have lasted you for many years!" This singular act of piety over, they close the day according to the usual custom, with feasting; and, on the very grave-mounds where a few moments before they prayed and wept, they now display the contents of their *Torba*, eating, drinking and making merry; as if there were not enough mournful emblems around to check their mirth in its very core.

The Croatian language, which is understood also by the Serbians, is an inharmonious idiom of the Sclavonian tongue. Like every Sclavonian tribe belonging to the Catholic creed, the Croats use the Latin characters in print and in writing. Their schools are few, and even those badly attended and

still worse managed; the chief part of the inhabitants neither being able to read nor write. The border districts, though better supplied with village schools, have none of a higher class; for as the men are trained solely for the military profession, they are not allowed to learn anything beyond the narrow compass of their oppressive duty.

As we have stated, the Croatian, Sclavonian, and Serbian borders are divided into eleven military districts, each of them furnishing one infantry regiment of four battalions, or three thousand one hundred men. As, however, every man is by birth a soldier, and must serve as long as he can bear arms, the number of battalions can easily be augmented.

So large a number of armed men, led as they are by their own native Generals, several of whom have gained at least Austrian renown, looks formidable enough upon paper; but loses much in the reality, like many other things in Austria bearing a grand name and an imposing appearance. It is a well-known fact that military training alone does not instil true martial spirit, and far less heroic devotion. Where there is no nobler motive power than pay or at most the prospect of plunder, the soldiers may be driven into battle and kept together as long as their arms are victorious; yet the first reverse demoralizes them, and they

rapidly succumb to the hardships of war. Such is the case, at least, with the Austrian Grenzers. They do well enough as cordonists against smugglers or Turkish depredators; yet in their present condition they can never gain fame in a regular battle. Even in the Austrian army they are looked upon as a body far below the common standard. As an illustration of this, we will quote one or two striking examples from modern history.

In September, 1848, Jellachich, Ban of Croatia, invaded Hungary with an army of fifty thousand Croats. This he did at a moment when the Hungarian nation still confided in the solemn oaths of their king, and were thus unprepared to meet a hostile aggression. Jellachich, aware of this, hastened by forced marches towards Buda-Pesth, in order at one blow to crush the liberty of the country. There was every prospect of a speedy victory; for who would dare to oppose the formidable legions that had already conquered the peaceful inhabitants of several counties, and, like their forefathers the Trenck-Pandurs, filled their knapsacks with spoil? Yet, contrary to all expectation, a few miles from the Capital a corps of fifteen thousand men—a medley of soldiers, citizens, national guards, ministers and members of the Diet—awaited the invaders in battle array, determined to face and to fight them. The Ban with his over-

whelming force could easily have crushed such a handful of men; such at least was the general impression. But it turned out quite the contrary; since as soon as the Croats heard the Hungarian bullets whizzing about their heads, they at once remembered that the better part of valour is discretion. Accordingly, after a short cannonade, they turned and fled; never looking back until they were safe under the walls of Vienna. This movement of Jellachich is immortalized in the Austrian annals as "The Ban's famous flank-manœuvre!"

The reserve corps of Jellachich, amounting to ten thousand men with twelve guns, which advanced along the Lake of Balaton a two days' journey behind the main army, was doomed to a still more ignominious defeat. At the tidings of the Ban's flight, the corps presently fell back towards Croatia. But the population, exasperated by the excesses the enemy had committed during their advance, had already risen *en masse*, gradually hemming them in on all sides, until there remained no chance of escape. In this emergency the Croats, instead of showing the muzzles of their guns, showed the white feather, and surrendered at the mercy of the people without having fired a single shot. The Hungarians, however, generous as usual in success, instead of treating the depredators as they deserved, regaled them with meat and wine and after

taking their oath that they would never again bear arms against the mother-country, sent them back with an escort to their homes.

The campaign in the spring and summer of 1849, proved not less disastrous to the Ban and his Croats. One of his brigades was annihilated by Damjanich at Szolnok on the fifth of March; another met a similar fate at Tápio-Bicske on the fourth of April; and on the sixth of the same month he at the head of his corps was defeated by Klapka and Damjanich. Such repeated reverses induced the Ban to fall back upon his resources in Croatia; from whence he re-appeared in Midsummer at the head of twenty thousand veterans, and commenced an advance upon Pesth between the Theiss and the Danube. Unfortunately, at Hegyes he encountered an Hungarian force of some eight thousand men under the Generals Vetter and Guyon, who gave him such a warm reception that he retreated, with a severe loss of men and guns, in one forced march behind the Danube, a distance of about fifty miles.

The Grenzers are all foot-soldiers, being quite unfit for cavalry service. During the above-named campaign the Austrians having no hussars at their disposal, made an attempt to organise a regiment of them in Croatia. They so far succeeded that eight hundred horses were equipped and

mounted by as many men, who were called the Banderial Hussars. The new cavalry were to gain their first laurels in the battle of Tápio-Bicske. When, on that day, the genuine hussars of Klapka were told whom they had to attack, they sheathed their swords, exclaiming, that they could put such scarecrows of troopers to flight with their fists. At the ensuing onset two squadrons of the 1st Hussars did literally disperse eight escadrons of Croats. The prisoners taken in that dashing exploit were conducted as great curiosities through the Hungarian camp, and the horsemen from the Theiss and the *Puszta* could not comprehend the impudence of a Grenzer daring to mount a steed in hussar attire.

After this defeat the Croatian hussars entirely disappeared from the scene of action.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SERBIANS.

ALMOST every page in Hungary's history, where mention is made of the Serbians, contains an account of the ingratitude, hatred and cruelty which they practised towards their adoptive country; the records assuming the darkest hues when we arrive at the period of their rebellion in 1848. No wonder that the Hungarians gave them the surname of "savages;" no parasite plant ever having promoted the destruction of the stem which afforded it support with more insidious perseverance, than did the Serbians by aiding every attempt of the foes of Hungary to destroy the vital force of the land, that in time of need so readily granted them a hospitable refuge, as well as political and religious liberties.

We find, as early as the fifteenth century, records of Serbian communities in Sclavonia, bearing the name of Shokáczs, and living promiscuously with the Croats, whose customs and religion they

generally adopted. The mass of those Serbians, however, who dwell on the Austrian side of the Save and Lower Danube, and from the time of their settlement there up to the present day have made themselves so conspicuous by their turbulence, fanaticism, and constant intercourse with their countrymen on Turkish territory, immigrated as late as the end of the seventeenth century, during the reign of Leopold I. They are the descendants of those fierce orthodox Serbians and Bosnians, who, owing to religious and political persecution, resolved to leave their home, and colonise the southern borders of the adjoining country, which, having been laid waste during the protracted struggle with Turkey, were offered to their envoys on condition that they should defend them against the inroads of the common enemy. The first troop of emigrants, led by their patriarch Arsenius and numbering 40,000 families, crossed the Danube in the year 1688. At the news of their happy arrival and settlement other bands followed at different times; so that the total number of the Serbian population along the borders now amounts to about 800,000.

The district they inhabit is a continuation of the great Hungarian plain, *Puszta*, which, bounded on the west by the Lower Danube, and on the east by the Transylvanian Alps, forms the

most fertile part of that country, and is known under the names of Bácska, Banat, and Syrmium.

During a journey across the *Puszta* the traveller has ample opportunity of observing the surpassing fertility of the land. The soil is a rich black loam, which, though but once tilled before it is sown, nevertheless year after year yields the most abundant produce. The crops scarcely ever fail; on the contrary it sometimes happens that the finest wheat is left lying upon the fields, owing to the want of hands and markets. The richness of the ground renders manuring superfluous; indeed injurious. The mildness of the climate promotes luxuriant vegetation; so that with the exception of oranges and olives most southern products flourish. Maize stalks reach the height of a man on horseback, the wheat bends to the ground under its own weight, and the melons are famed for flavour and size. The cultivated tracts are surrounded by extensive pastures, upon which numberless herds of half-wild cattle roam throughout the year. The intervening lakes and morasses are the resort of myriads of wild fowl, pelicans, herons, &c., which, when disturbed, rise in immense flocks into the air, and like a cloud darken for a moment the light of the sun. Thither herds of hogs and buffaloes repair in summer, and find ample food and water. The former in particular

are usually accompanied in their journeyings by a number of crows, who pick their food from their backs, and live on the best possible terms with their grunting steeds.

Surrounded by nature's bounties, the Serbians live mingled with Hungarians and Germans in their scattered and populous villages, some of them containing nearly 20,000 inhabitants. As there is land in abundance, a village is spread over a large tract, and produces on approach a dreary impression from the great want of foliage. The streets are unpaved and immensely wide, skirted by deep one-storied cottages, built of raw bricks and thatched with reeds or straw, with the gable end towards the street. Beneath the two front windows is usually a rustic seat, shaded by a solitary tree, and before this stands the dunghill, the ordinary indication of a Serbian dwelling. A cottage of this description is inhabited by a single family, and contains two dwelling rooms, divided by the kitchen. Beyond this come the larder, dairy, stables and the various out-buildings for agricultural use; the whole inclosed by a spacious yard and garden. The gable end of almost every house is surmounted by a stork's nest, who there breed their progeny. Though these birds migrate in the autumn, they or their posterity invariably return to their nests, which they hold as an here-

ditary possession as long as a single member of their family remains. We will imagine that the Gospodar or master of the house has just returned from the field in his cart to which two fleet horses are attached; or in his heavy waggon drawn by a team of six oxen. Whilst his boys surround the vehicle and unharness the animals, the Gospodar welcomes us as his guests; hospitality being one of the domestic virtues of the dwellers on the *Puszta*. We accept the friendly bidding and follow him to the kitchen, which serves also for a hall. It is well supplied with copper and earthenware utensils, and contains a large raised hearth upon which all the cooking is done, and above which, in the lofty chimney, are seen sides of pork suspended for smoking. The whitewashed walls of the dwelling-rooms are hung with a goodly array of pots, and with gaudy-coloured woodcuts or pictures upon glass, representations of the Saints most worshipped in the Greek church, as Nicholas, Basyl, George, also the Holy Virgin, and the archangel Michael. Near these paintings there is a bedstead, piled up to the ceiling with feather beds. In a corner stands a stove of considerable size, and opposite to it a heavy oaken table, on which the covered loaf and salt always stand ready to be placed before the guest, with a jug of wine or a bottle of brandy.

In Hungary the Serbians are known under the name of Ráczok. They, however, call themselves Shokáczs and Illyrians; the former belonging to the Roman Catholic, and the latter to the Greek Church. The Illyrians inhabit the Banat and Bácska; and the Shokáczs Syrmium as well as the military borders amongst the Croats. Though of the same origin and speaking the same language, the difference in their religion has variously affected the character and habits of the Serbians, and drawn a strong line of demarcation between them. Long subjection under the Turkish yoke has made the Greek Serbian fanatical, suspicious and vindictive. He hates every other race, every other faith; and though he has a natural predilection for freedom and independence, still, from ignorance and bigotry, he is the willing slave of his priest, who alike uneducated becomes in his turn a tool in the hand of the first skilful intriguer. The Catholic Serbians are more gentle and conciliating. Their priests, too, as is the case among the Romish clergy in Hungary, are more enlightened and tolerant. A Greek priest has seldom more knowledge than that acquired in some miserable village or cloister school; yet he exercises boundless influence over his flock. His income is derived chiefly from the voluntary contributions of his community, and from the produce

of a few acres of land, which he tills with his own hands; also from the sale of holy pictures and relics, used as charms against illness and evil spirits. The monks and higher dignitaries of the Greek Church are condemned to celibacy, but the village priest is permitted to marry once. The consequence of such a restriction is, that the latter, particularly when he is fond of his wife, does all in his power to make her as happy and contented as possible and to guard her from any ailment which might endanger her precious life; and of course often pays a heavy penalty in the whims and caprices of his spoiled helpmate. The primate of Moscow is also the primate of the Serbians, and the Emperor of Russia the acknowledged head of their church, and the representative of the Almighty on earth. In all their prayers the Emperor Nicholas takes precedence of their own sovereign, and they look to Russia as their deliverer from some evil existing only in their own unenlightened brains.

Their language is a Sclavonian dialect resembling the Russian. But here again a difference so far exists between the two sects, that, while the Greeks retain the Russian, the Catholics use the Latin characters. So it is with their dress. The latter have adopted the Croat habiliments; with the former the costume of their mountain homes still predominates, the men wearing fine white

calico shirts and drawers, short jackets, flat broad-brimmed hats or high fur caps and a sheepskin thrown over their shoulders.

The Serbians are tall, slight and well made, with dark complexions, the result of climate rather than a characteristic of their race; for blue eyes are frequently to be seen amongst them. The men wear long hair and moustaches, their features are regular, but with a somewhat suspicious and sinister expression. In advanced life they become emaciated from frequent fastings and from the too free use of brandy, *Rakie*. The Serbians are naturally idle, and this disposition is materially promoted alike by the ease with which they gain their living as by their religious observances. Their holidays form a third part of the year, during which time they dare not labour, unless upon the fields of their priests, whereby they are taught to believe they are working for their salvation. The women are handsome, and delight in decking themselves in silks and finery of all descriptions. Their caps are thickly ornamented with gold tinsel over which a veil is thrown. Like the Croatian women they use paint from an early age, and adorn their ears with rings, and their necks with rows of coral beads. Bright colours are most admired; even their boots and shoes are often made of red or yellow leather.

Among their superstitious customs, homage to the genius of Spring, though savouring of paganism, evinces a spirit of poetry. On St. George's eve the girls of a village, dressed in their best clothes, collect the sweetest field flowers and wander forth in troops to the nearest river or lake, into which they throw their offering amidst singing, dancing and merry-making. Their favourite music is produced by the Gusla, a one-stringed instrument resembling the guitar. It is an inheritance from their native country, and with it they accompany their monotonous songs.

Brought up in profound ignorance and influenced by so many prejudices, their imagination is of course perpetually beset by witches and ghosts, who play a prominent and certainly a very mischievous part, even in their most trivial occupations. At the head of their evil spirits stands the Vampyre, an active and destructive monster, without any defined shape, but nevertheless universally acknowledged and dreaded. According to their belief the Vampyre rises from the corpses of those who have died excommunicate, or who, owing to their ill conduct through life, are supposed to have descended to the nether regions. To the spirits of such persons the Serbians attribute supernatural power over the living, whom they are said to be able to visit and torment at pleasure. The Vam-

pyre comes forth from its grave at midnight, and glides through the keyhole into the room of the sleeper, whose blood it gradually sucks out. The victim ere long expires and in turn becomes a Vampyre, carrying on after death the same terrible practice. Whenever one or two sudden deaths occur, they are ascribed to a nocturnal visitor of this kind, and the inhabitants at once resort to the most efficacious means for putting a stop to their pernicious traffic. As a community is seldom without some member who bears an evil reputation to his grave, the finger of the public points to him as the cause of the calamity, and the people sometimes led by the priest and magistrate betake themselves to the cemetery, to subject the suspected corpse to a lynch law process. The grave is opened, its occupier again brought to the light of day, and on the priest's granting a formal absolution of his sins, the corpse, at the command of the magistrate, is fixed to the coffin by a stake, to prevent it from again rising; and in some cases when the efficacy of the stake is doubted, the body is burned and the ashes scattered to the winds.

Next to the Vampyres rank the witches. Although represented here, as everywhere, in the harmless form of a decrepit old woman, they likewise are supposed to be invested with superhuman powers and are made responsible for all the petty

accidents of daily life, that befal either man or beast. It is believed that the devil lends them his powerful aid during life, and in consideration of his services carries them off after a fixed period amidst a storm of hail and thunder. This invisible abduction always happens before the corpse reaches consecrated ground. As an illustration thereof we may here relate the following anecdote: A few years since an aged woman, suspected of witchcraft, died in one of the Serbian villages. In opposition to strong public feeling the last rites of religion had been performed, and the coffin was borne towards its resting-place followed by a concourse of her neighbours. The procession set out under a cloudless sky, but as it approached the cemetery all at once a furious storm broke forth. The coffin was abandoned, and the attendants ran right and left in search of shelter from the violence of the tempest. In a short time the weather cleared up and the funeral train was again about to proceed, when on lifting up the coffin the men declared that it felt empty. Suspecting some mischief they opened it, and lo! instead of the corpse there lay nought save an old broom.

As the Serbians never constituted a distinct political body, their communities are comprised in those of the counties, where they dwell promiscuously with other races, and share equally in their rights

and burdens. That district which forms a portion of the southern military borders, and includes about two thirds of the Serbian population, is under the command of a military Board and is divided into four regimental districts of foot, each mustering four battalions of 800 men, and one battalion of Czaikists or boatmen of the Danube.

The Serbians possess a decided warlike spirit, which, kept within proper bounds, is capable of great things. But their ferocious and lawless propensities greatly diminish their worth as allies, and as adversaries render them more troublesome than dangerous. Like the Croatian borderers, they are, notwithstanding their courage, less fitted for a lengthened combat in line than for the defence of entrenchments and villages. But most of all are they adapted for surprises and razzias, whereby momentary and individual valour may turn the fate of the day in their favour. In war they know no mercy, and perpetrate atrocities and excesses of the wildest kind. Of this the inhabitants of Hungary have had many fearful proofs. Scarcely had the Serbians settled down in their new home, than in the third year of the eighteenth century they were summoned by the Emperor of Austria to muster all their available forces against the Hungarians, who under the guidance of Prince Rákóczi had risen to defend their constitutional independ-

ence against the liberticidal attempts of their Austrian sovereigns. It is true the Serbians had only bound themselves to fight the Turks; but the occasion was too enticing for them to allow it to escape, though at the expense of their hosts. A prospect of rich booty far outweighed the dictates of honour and gratitude, and they set out in large numbers, marching between the Theiss and Danube and extending their incursions as far as the Carpathians. They carried on a warfare like that which they had been wont to wage against their former masters the Turks; that is to say with fire and sword. Wherever their terrible bands passed there every trace of life and of civilisation disappeared. Thus they went on plundering and murdering during the whole of the Hungarian war of Independence, from 1703 till 1709. The witnesses to these unheard-of cruelties learnt to speak of the Serbians with a shudder, and bestowed upon them the cognomen of "savages," which afterwards became proverbial. As long as their bands could be of any use Austria flattered their vanity, and kept their hopes of independence alive by glowing promises. No sooner, however, was peace restored, than the promises were forgotten, and under Maria Theresa, who would gladly have seen in each of her subjects either a monk or a nun, the Greek Serbians were compelled to adopt the Romish faith.

The consequence of this forcible attempt at proselytism was a general rising, which was suppressed first by the sword and then by the execution of hundreds of their chiefs, the most orthodox being compelled to leave the country. Several thousand families wandered to Russia, where they were favourably received and afterwards formed a colony called New Servia. Seeing how their services to Austria had been remunerated, and how little chance they had of realizing their ambitious designs on that score, the Serbians struck into an opposite course, and in the year 1790 petitioned the Hungarian Diet as to their definitive fusion with Hungary. The Diet forgetting past wrongs, made the greatest efforts to free all their tribes from the military rule of Austria, but succeeded only in favour of a third part who were incorporated with the counties they lived in.

The experience of a constitutional existence soon convinced at least the more intelligent among them, that their interests were closely blended with those of the other races in Hungary, and that, by promoting the welfare of the latter, they would also advance their own. Time went on and at length the memorable year 1848 arrived. In the first glow of enthusiasm the aristocratic Diet, with one single stroke, razed to the ground all the feudal barriers that were represented as obstructive

to general prosperity and civilisation, abolishing the tithes and all seignorial rights; introducing an uniform taxation, trials by jury, &c., whereby thousands of nobles despoiled themselves in order to enrich millions of the peasantry. Never was the full meaning of the words, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, more nobly and practically carried out! All these results were gained without compulsion or ill-will. It now remained to reap the benefit of them. Yet the very contrary happened.

The dynasty, terrified at the sight of such radical reforms, and anxious and determined not to allow their firm establishment, threw the apple of discord amongst the various races by persuading them, and more particularly the Serbian priesthood and several of their leaders, that the moment for realising their favourite project of forming an independent Serbian state had at length arrived. The populace, easily misled and fanaticised, gathered in large meetings and demanded, together with the Croats, an entire separation from Hungary, alleging that the Magyars wanted to suppress their religion and language. The mild remonstrances of the Hungarian Ministry were of no avail; on the contrary rather hastened the outbreak of the crisis. On Easter Monday, 1848, a Serbian mob unfurled the flag of rebellion against the constitution, and commenced a civil

war by exacting a division of property on communistical principles, and then by the slaughter of the Hungarian and German magistrates and the nobles. The fire long and cleverly kindled, spread rapidly over several of the southern counties and the borders. With the tacit consent of Austria, whole battalions of borderers as well as bands of freebooters from Servia Proper, swelled the number of the rebels. The southern boundary of Hungary by degrees became the arena of the most fearful carnage and depredation, carried on almost with impunity, owing to the secret understanding of the Austrian Generals who at the commencement commanded the Honvéds and National Guards sent to re-establish order. Hence the Serbians were enabled to convert their villages into entrenched camps, from whence they carried on a desultory warfare, raising their armed force to 40,000, commanded by their national generals Theodorovics and Knicsanin.

But in spite of their numerical superiority, they were incapable of coping with their adversaries, the Honvéds. During the following spring of 1849, they were conquered both in the field and in their entrenchments, and their rebellion completely uprooted.

Of their martial prowess the Serbians often gave surprising proofs. They were particularly skilful

in surprises. From their inaptitude as horsemen, they carried on their predatory expeditions in light carts, usually occupied by four armed men, and drawn by two small but agile horses. The level character of the country greatly favoured this kind of warfare, and they soon brought it to such perfection that hundreds of vehicles manœuvred together, without ever getting entangled in their rapid evolutions. Thus the Serbians appeared and disappeared on some exposed point ere the Hussars, of whom they were in great awe, could come up to them. Once, however, overtaken and seeing no hope of retreat, they fairly stood at bay, often fighting bravely to the last man.

An account of one of their most terrible and best-planned surprises during the entire war will give a tolerable idea of the manner in which the Serbians carried on the contest.

Towards the middle of December, 1848, having stormed several of the entrenched camps of the Serbians, the Hungarian General Damjanich resolved to attack Tomassovatz, where their chief force was concentrated. The night previous to the contemplated attack, Damjanich took up his quarters with his division, consisting of four battalions, six escadrons and sixteen guns, in the widely-spread and populous village of Jarkovatz, about ten miles distant from Tomassovatz. The inhabitants, prin-

cipally Serbians, hearing of the approach of the redoubted Hungarian chief, set out in procession with flags of truce to implore his mercy, and were not only pardoned for their participation in the rebellion, but, having taken the oath of allegiance to the constitution, the Honvéds cordially fraternised with them, and joined in the entertainments got up in commemoration of their brotherly union by the villagers, in whose houses they were quartered in numbers from eight to ten. Lulled into a feeling of safety by such true Hungarian hospitality, the troops gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the moment, little dreaming that they were surrounded by an implacable enemy, that a dagger lurked behind every friendly word, every smiling glance. Night fell amidst rejoicings and merry-making, a foggy, dark, winter night, under the impenetrable cover of which a fearful attack was gradually organised by the Serbians. Their most valiant corps, till then in Tomassovatz, evacuated that place at the approach of the Hungarians, and advanced at dusk into the vicinity of Jarkovatz. From thence they detached a battalion of borderers, who, favoured by the darkness, stole into the village in small bands, where they were concealed by the inhabitants in cellars and barns. The feasting lasted until midnight. The Honvéds, overcome by wine and fatigue, went to sleep, many of them never

again to awake. Of the whole division there were, besides the few outposts, only two companies under arms on guard near the guns stationed in the middle of the village.

About two hours after midnight, when the carousing had entirely ceased, all at once the discharge of musketry resounded from the outposts, followed by a short lull, not unlike that which precedes the outbreak of a hurricane. Then, as if that discharge had caused the explosion of a mine of gigantic force and dimensions, the deathlike stillness that hung over the village changed into the wildest uproar. Scarcely had the attack of the Serbian army commenced on the outskirts than their comrades in Jarkovatz as well as the inhabitants, who were impatiently awaiting for that signal, fell upon their sleeping guests, slaying all who came singly within reach of their knives. This mute massacre lasted but a few moments. The Honvéds, though completely taken by surprise, nevertheless undauntedly seized their muskets, broke through the ranks of the assailants, and made good their retreat into the streets, where a scene of indescribable excitement and confusion ensued. There in the narrow, winding, mazy thoroughfares and lanes, the stream of fugitive Honvéds, Hussars, guns and carts collected into a vast chaotic mass, driven to and fro by the pressure of the increasing

tide, were encompassed by a hundredfold death showered upon them from windows, walls, fences, in a word, from every side, by the hand of an invisible foe, against whom they could see no means of defending themselves.

The Serbians, on the contrary, took every opportunity of making the most of their overwhelming forces and superior position. As many of them spoke Hungarian, they used it to allure the Honvéds into ambuscades. From various points they called out for aid in that language, and when the latter rushed to the rescue of their supposed comrades, they were received by a volley, which, of course, greatly added to their bewilderment, and led to the natural result that in the utter darkness, lighted up only by the flashes of the guns, they frequently mistook a fresh arrival of their own troops for those of the enemy, and fired on them, which being duly returned, did not tend to diminish the confusion. Moreover the deafening noise proceeding from this terrible scene of tumult and carnage drowned even the words of command, and frustrated all attempts of the officers to restore something like order in the ranks. The contest at every step assumed a more desperate character. The destruction of the entire corps seemed inevitable. To render their situation still further hopeless, the main body of the Serbians, under the command of

Knicsanin, their ablest leader, after a short fight drove back the Hungarian outposts, entered the village, and with their guns occupied the outlets and a bridge over the river which flowed behind Járkovatz in the rear of the Hungarians, whose only line of retreat was thus cut off. Fortunately, it was not the first occasion on which the corps had withstood a night attack, although not of such magnitude; and the Honvéds of Damjanich especially, were already veterans in that description of warfare. Thus, when the first surprise was fairly over, the soldiers halted in their disorderly flight, and flocked manfully around their officers, amongst whom the most conspicuous, from his athletic figure and superhuman energy, was Damjanich, their beloved commander, who at the first alarm had hastened into the midst of that formidable struggle, rallying and encouraging his men to hold out to the last. His presence had the usual electric effect. By the light of some houses fired by the enemy's grenades, he collected several companies, and led them on the right and left to the charge, himself breaking a path with the bayonet through the thick ranks of the Serbians. During this tumult, a furious and sanguinary struggle hand to hand raged in the houses and streets; for though a great part of the Honvéds had made good their retreat by clearing the streets and storming

the bridge, there still remained many scattered troops in the village, who, cut off from the army, fought fiercely for their lives.

After a contest of several hours it was evident that the enemy, disappointed at the ill success of his surprise, began to give way before the indomitable courage of the 3rd battalion and the Red-caps.*

At length morning dawned, and Damjanich was enabled to reconnoitre, and to muster his scattered forces. He then proceeded to the entire clearing of Járkovatz, and to the pursuit of the Serbians, part of whom were seen flying towards the Danube.

At the end of the war the Serbians expecting an adequate reward for their enormous sacrifices in aiding to preserve the dynasty, solicited the fulfilment of the promises made to them by the latter. Great must their mortification and rage have been on finding themselves paid precisely in the same manner and with the same coin as were their ancestors! And when they began impetuously to press their claims, their leaders, who had worked the most zealously for the Hapsburgs, were arrested and either thrown into prison or exiled.

* The ninth battalion wore a red cap as a mark of distinction for their indomitable valour. Of all the Hungarian troops they were the most dreaded by the Serbians; the sight of them alone sufficing to put the bravest bands of the latter to flight.

The district was placed under martial law; the Serbian colours, white and red, prohibited; the newspapers suppressed, and in their public transactions as well as in the village schools, the German language introduced. As a recognition for their treachery to the cause of liberty, Austria united the three counties, where the Serbians are most numerous, into a district, calling it the Vojvodina; taking care, however, to appoint a General at the head with the full power of administering the only reward of despotism, martial law, instead of the repudiated constitution of 1848.

Too late did the misguided people awake to a sense of their suicidal proceedings. They had cut the tree not only under the Hungarians, but also under themselves, and now writhe under the iron heels of their trusty confederates, the Austrians.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HUNGARIAN GIPSIES.

AMONG the arteries, wherein the national life of Hungary circulates, the microscopic eye may discern a minute vein, that by its pallid hue and diverging course leaves the observer in doubt as to the real cause and utility of its existence. In this isolated channel the remnant of the voluntary Pariahs of Hungary—the Gipsies—moves slowly onwards to final extinction.

"On inquiring into the means by which this handful of people have maintained themselves for centuries as a distinct race, we find it is owing to their inconquerable antipathy to any fixed abode and intermixture with other nations. It would appear, as though the unseen power that once scattered their tribes, had condemned them to perpetual wandering, and quenched in the core every germ of mental development, so restlessly have the Gipsies roamed over the earth during the memory of man, evincing no inclination for culture,

regardless of the morrow, without a remembrance of yesterday, guided in their joyless and dreary path by their uncontrolled instincts and the impulse of the moment.

No age, no climate, no example, has exercised any influence on this infatuated race. Whether amongst nations refined or uncultivated, idle or industrious, they remain the same thoughtless and indolent nomades, clinging pertinaciously to their ancient customs.

Both persecution and well-meant attempts to civilise have only served to strengthen them in their old and perverse habits. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, considerable efforts were made by Maria Theresa and Joseph II. to accustom the Gipsies to a regular mode of life. Hundreds of families were collected, lands with agricultural implements gratuitously distributed among them, and they were made to work under the inspection of the authorities. But they felt utterly miserable in their new position, and decamped at the first opportunity, either leaving the country entirely, or hiding themselves in the forests until the danger of civilisation had passed. Attempts of a different kind produced equally unfavourable results. In two or three counties the children were forcibly carried off from their parents and sent to distant places, where they were educated at the expense

of government for agricultural pursuits. They, however, fondly preserved the memory of the haunts of their childhood, and sooner or later joined some Gipsy band. Even children, who for years had distinguished themselves at school, were suddenly seized with a longing to be again on the wing, and ran away never to return.

The first mention made of the Gipsies by the Hungarian historians was in the beginning of the fifteenth century, during the reign of King Sigismund. In the year 1417 bands of strangers appeared on the borders of Wállachia and Moldavia —then Hungarian provinces—to solicit admission into the interior of the realm. Their singular manners and appearance created much attention, and betokened them a migratory people, inasmuch as they were accompanied by their wives and children, and carried with them their goods and chattels. These strangers had tall, muscular figures, olive complexions, long black hair, dark fiery eyes and white teeth. The agility of their limbs they best displayed in their original dances. They wore garments of an oriental and fantastic make, dwelt under tents; the men occupying themselves with the forge, music and dance, and the women chiefly with fortune-telling. They were led by chiefs, *Vajdák*, and called themselves *Tschingan*, or *Czigány*, which name they retained in Hungary.

These bands formed the vanguard of those migratory Hindoo tribes, about half a million of whom, driven from their home in Hindostan by that fearful scourge of mankind, Timurlan, had successively traversed Affghanistan, Asia Minor, and Thrace, and whose influx to Europe to this day has not ceased. Their language amongst each other, however corrupted, bore, and still bears, an unmistakeable affinity to the Hindostance, the words of daily use sounding alike in both languages, from which their Indian descent may best be inferred.

Access to the Hungarian provinces was readily granted to the Czigánys, who from thence spread over the other countries of Europe under the name of Egyptians. This name they assumed in order to make their descent mysterious, and the better to impose their soothsaying upon the credulity of people. In France only they are called Bohemians, from the first Gipsies who appeared there coming from Bohemia.

King Sigismund of Hungary not only tolerated them, but shortly after their arrival, that is to say, in 1423, granted them a charter, in virtue of which they remained under the jurisdiction of their own Vajdák, and in every part of the land could lay claim to royal protection.*

* One of the charters granted to the Gipsies at a later period, deserves for its originality to be quoted at full

The whole of the scattered tribes had a chief Vajda, elected for life by the free choice of his people, and confirmed by the Palatine. In his person the chief Vajda enjoyed the privileges of a nobleman, and was the arbitrator in all important disputes. Every adult Gipsy had the right of voting, and all were eligible for chief Vajda, who had sprung from a family counting at least one

length:—"We, George Count Thurzo, Palatine of Hungary, &c. to the prelates, barons, &c., greeting.

"As the vultures of the air have their nests, the foxes their holes, the wolves their lurking places, the lions and bears their caves, and every animal its shelter, except the poor Egyptian people, called Czigány, who, according to their ancient custom, are living in the open fields under tents, leading the hardest life, exposed, old and young, to rain, cold and heat, possessing lands neither in towns nor boroughs, unacquainted with ambition, getting their living and clothing by means of their handiwork as smiths, and being compelled to wander, not only throughout Hungary, but over the whole world, over sea and land, over rocks and through fire; we, therefore, deem this people worthy of our mercy and kindness, and we beseech and command you that as often as any of this Egyptian race—particularly the bearer of this our letter, Ferencz Vajda, not the meanest of his tribe—appears with the Czigánys under his guidance, with their families, tents, anvils, bellows, hammers, tongs, and other properties, thus coming to your territories, to treat them honourably and courteously, and to permit them to pitch their tents in the suburbs or fields, to exercise their cunning as blacksmiths, and to protect their persons, as well as their property, against any violence and attack, which you will and must do.

"Byche, February 20, 1617."

among its ancestors, the preference being given to the one who, besides having attained a ripe age, had a stately figure, possessed good clothes, and as much property as to enable him to regale his best friends. To his mental and moral qualifications little importance was attached. After his election, the chief Vajda was lifted up three times on the arms of the bystanders; the same honour was likewise conferred upon his wife, and from that moment he carried a whip on his shoulder, as an insignia of his office. Each head of a family was bound to pay the chief Vajda the yearly tribute of a shilling on St. George's day and at Michaelmas.

The official form of a Gipsy oath in olden times ran thus: "As God drowned King Pharaoh in the Red Sea, so may he let me sink into the depths of the earth, and may I be cursed, if I do not speak the truth. May I never succeed in a theft, in a barter, or any other business; may my horse be transformed into an ass, and I die on the gallows." From this it would appear that pilfering with them was a tolerated means of gaining a subsistence; and the Vajda never punished a thief for his theft, but for his awkwarkness in allowing himself to be surprised in the act.

Thus, while the Gipsies in other countries were subjected to every kind of persecution, in Hungary they enjoyed comparative freedom, and even a sort

of constitution, which lasted till the end of the seventeenth century.

We will now turn to a closer examination of the propensities and manners of the Hungarian Gipsy or *Morre*, as he is likewise called by the people.

Despite his moral degradation, there are still a few bright spots in his character, whereon the eye lingers with interest, nay, even with pleasure. In describing the Gipsy metaphorically, we might liken him to a lonely, dilapidated hut, in a sheltered nook of which a swallow had chanced to build its nest. Undismayed by the surrounding decay, the bird warbles forth its merry notes of self-content, investing the dreary spot with a ray of cheerful life. Thus Nature, in one of her peculiar caprices, has endowed the Gipsy with an inexhaustible store of contentment and wit; all his sayings and doings bear the impress of them; so much so that, in the midst of misery and want, in spite of his wretched exterior, he may still call forth a feeling of mirth or commiseration, yet seldom one of disgust. These attributes form the bright background of his degraded and darkened existence, the shadows of which, as they pass across it, thus losing much of their gloom. As specimens of his love of making jokes, even from his own misfortune, we may give the following. A Gipsy on his way to the gallows said to the executioner, "Be

so good as to hang me with my back towards the highroad, as I should feel extremely annoyed if any of my relations should chance to pass by and recognise me in that embarrassing position." Another, after he had received severe chastisement *à posteriori* from a judicial cudgel, for some mischief he had committed, was asked how he felt after it? "Why, perfectly comfortable," he replied, "for I make it a rule never to trouble myself with what happens behind my back."

The shafts of the Gipsy's wit are generally aimed at himself, his timid nature not venturing, even in jest, to offend another. When merry he is exceedingly loquacious and jocular, outdoing himself in punning, and keeping a whole company for hours on the laugh. However he may seem to submit to the contemptuous treatment of his superiors with an apparent good grace, still he is secretly revengeful, and his curses are truly terrible. There are instances where he is said to have excited people to madness by his musical skill. For this purpose he procures a lock of his victim's hair, mounts his fiddlestick with it, and plays to the object of his hatred, who, as if under the influence of a charm, must dance as long as the music continues.

Where he thinks himself a match, the Gipsy is overbearing and a great bully; but if blows ensue, he is the first to take to his heels. Of his bravado

and mock courage the following anecdote conveys a tolerable idea. A *Morre*, when travelling with his old mare on a very bad and muddy road, remarked another cart approaching. He called to the driver from afar with threatening gestures, that if he did not make room for him, he would just see what he would do. The intimidated Jehu instantly pulled up. As the Gipsy triumphantly drove past, the other asked, "What would you have done if I had not got out of the way?" "Why, you stupid fellow," replied the *Morre*, with a shrewd grin, and a flourishing of his whip, "in that case I should have made way for you."

Although uncultivated and ignorant, the *Morre* is uncommonly cunning in business, and can scarcely be surpassed in inventing lies and subterfuges. Communistic propensities, as well as dislike to any regular occupation, are striking traits in his character; but, more remarkable than all, is his decided aversion to stationary property, in which his race is a peculiar exception to the rest of mankind.

His idea of God is connected with fear, for, as he says, God takes away his dearest possession—his life. Of a continuation of an existence in a happier state he has no conception.

"When my *Dade*, father, died," he remarks, "he laid motionless; he no longer cared for his *Purdés*, children, and though we offered him the best part

of a piece of beef, his favourite dish, still he would not eat. Now, if the smell of fine roast beef would not awake him, so much the more improbable is it that he will wake up in a christian paradise, where there is nothing to afford pleasure to a Gipsy." Nor does he ever trouble his mind with religious scruples; and to the forms of worship he is quite indifferent, turning Catholic when dwelling in a Catholic community, with the same unconcern as he turns Protestant or Mahometan when induced to do so by fear or profit. To this ready compliance it may be attributed that in Hungary no Gipsy has ever suffered persecution on account of his faith.

For obvious reasons, the Gipsy has a great objection to be watched in his proceedings, and therefore always pitches his tent, or, if he is likely to remain for some time in one place, builds his hut at a distance from the towns and villages. The huts are partly dug into the earth and thatched with turf, leaving a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape. The contents of this miserable hovel consist solely of a couple of violins and the implements for forging; and yet, as soon as the fire is kindled, and the kettle hung over it, the Gipsy, with his *Gast*, helpmate, and *Purdés*, feels perfectly comfortable. There the *Morre* passes a part of his life in sleeping and smoking, exposed to want

and the inclemency of the weather; but bearing his privations with such a cheerful spirit, that he may truly be called a Diogenes, though without his lantern, as he searches not for men but for their goods, and in looking after the latter he needs no light. A *Morre* was once found sitting on the banks of the Theiss, supping the water from the river with a spoon. On being asked what he was about he gravely replied, "I am eating fish soup." "Well, but where are the fish?" "In the river," was the rejoinder. Another went into the market to buy something to satisfy his appetite, which was just then greater than his means. He therefore tried to get the cheapest and the largest quantity of eatables for his money. After a long search he purchased a bunch of horseradishes, and began greedily to chew the pungent roots. Tears soon streamed from his eyes upon the unpalatable food; still he went on eating, only thus apostrophising his eyes: "Ay, you may weep on, it is all your fault; why did you not look better after what you purchased?"

The Gipsy's food consists chiefly of meat and bread; the latter his wife prepares in the eastern fashion, in flat cakes baked in red-hot ashes. Except horses, all animals which have died a natural death are considered dainties. "What is killed by God," he says, "is better than that killed by

men." Cattle destroyed by fire he prefers to all. As the vultures scent the presence of a carcass, as instinctively do the Gipsies discover in which village in the neighbourhood an animal lies dead. Such an event is hailed with ecstasy by them. Young and old hasten to the spot, each endeavouring to save the largest share for himself. They then boil and roast the meat, and feast during several days; whilst the rest is smoked or dried in the sun, and then eaten without farther preparation. Their usual beverage is water; and of spirits they give the preference to brandy. Both men and women are passionately fond of smoking, in the enjoyment of which they gladly renounce all nourishment. The pipe is only removed from their mouths to make way for rolls of tobacco; and if no supply of this is at hand, they chew the other end of their wooden pipe-tubes.

In their clothing they evince the same disregard of decency and indifference to the changes of climate as in their other habits. The children are left to run about naked; the adults of both sexes are dressed in rags and tatters and generally go with uncovered heads and bare feet. But their lively dispositions make up for all their material wants. A Gipsy running across a field in the most piercing cold, having only an old net for a covering, when asked if he were not almost frozen,

poked a finger through his airy garment, and although shivering, replied with perfect good temper—"Oh dear no, but I think it must be mighty chilly outside."

Another, strolling through a village on a rainy day in a pair of torn boots, was accosted by a passer-by, who suggested that his boots were much too bad for such weather. "You are mistaken, sir," the *Morre* said proudly, "it is the weather that is too bad for my boots."

The greatest predilection predominates among them for richly-braided and furred Hungarian clothes; their taste in the selection of them is highly grotesque, the gayest colours being the most in demand. Old hussars, on their return home from service, are assailed by the brown troops, who play their sweetest airs to them, and offer all their treasures, in order to obtain the longed-for green coat, red trousers, blue furred-coat, and boots with spurs, in which they strut up and down the village with as important a mien as their chief Vajda was wont to do in better days No sooner have they got into an Hungarian uniform than they feel inspired with warlike ardour, which otherwise they are not much troubled with, and which quickly evaporates at the sight of real danger. In the same proportion as they evince a predilection for the Hungarian attire, so they despise the French as

well as the peasant dress, which they consider beneath their dignity to wear.

The want of food and other commodities of life has no influence on the Gipsies' health. In infancy, they learn to endure every sort of privation and neglect, and thus become hardened against illness. Cripples are seldom seen amongst them; they are generally blessed with sound limbs and muscular frames.

An extraordinary attachment to life renders the Gipsy timid, so much so, that his cowardice has become proverbial. As he possesses nothing but his life, he says he must preserve it by every means, and thus never resorts to suicide. Still, in illness he does not seek medical aid; saffron, taken in soup, bleeding or cupping, being the only remedies he uses; the rest is left to nature.

No Jew ever abhorred fire-arms more than the *Morre* does; therefore his services as a soldier are of no value. In that capacity alone he loses his gaiety, and becomes a misanthrope. His despair is graphically pictured in the following laconic letter, which a Gipsy recruit sent to his mother. As he could not write, he requested a comrade to indite a letter for him. "Write to her," he said, "'woe;'—again, 'woe,'—and a third time, 'woe,' even to the soul of my grandmother! Not a word more; my mother will understand me perfectly."

History has only one fact on record, where the *Morre*, musket in hand, faced the enemy. This happened in the middle of the seventeenth century, when an Hungarian commander, in want of better troops, intrusted the Gipsies of Nagy-Ida with the defence of an intrenchment near Kassa. The affair, as usual with the Gipsy, took a comic turn, but unfortunately terminated in a tragedy.

On the commander's assuring the brown warriors that no enemy's balls would hit them in the front, they not only courageously met the attack, but repelled the Austrians after a fierce combat with great loss. Seeing them retreating, the *Morres*, elated with victory, mounted the breastwork, calling out after them: "You cowardly fellows, you are running away just as we had used up all our powder." The enemy, on hearing this, and taking it for a fact, as it really was, returned to the attack, and as the garrison had no ammunition, carried the entrenchment, putting all the Gipsies to the sword. Since that fatal day, whenever a *Morre* speaks of a friend's misfortune, he exclaims: "It happened to him just as to our brothers of Nagy-Ida."

It is not to be denied that the Gipsy is gifted with much natural talent, which, with a little good-will and perseverance, might be turned to great

advantage. His admirable genius for music, particularly on the violin, deserves the first mention. When asked what he is, the *Morre* replies with a shrug, "I don't know!" adding in a dreamy way, "ask my violin!" And he is right. As soon as he begins to play his untaught melodies, the violin seems inspired with life, as though it really were a member of the doomed race and felt their misfortunes, telling of the long series of their ancient and present sufferings; and its plaintive tones are so touching, so melancholy, that the listener is imperceptibly overcome by deep sadness; but more so the performer. An unusual animation overspreads his countenance, his eyes flash, large tears roll down his hollow cheeks, and his fingers sweep more impetuously over the strings. The gentle complaint turns into a wild, warlike strain. It is a call to arms; a challenge for vengeance against his oppressors. The storm gradually melts into a cheerful melody. The victory is gained, the long-forgotten home is reconquered, and the air ends with a sudden shout of triumph. The bright vision is gone, and the musician passes his hand across his eyes to efface the last trace of his emotion. He is again the thoughtless and frivolous *Morre*.

We seldom find a Gipsy without a violin or hammer; his helpers in time of need. Both play-

ing and forging he practises from childhood; and no doubt his ability as a musician was one of the primary causes of his toleration in Hungary, her inhabitants being passionate lovers of music.

In his perpetual roving throughout that country the Gipsy has completely caught the character of the national music. He acquires at the source the countless sweet and melancholy airs composed and sung by the people, and plays them, without knowing a single note, with such animation and correctness, that he has obtained, as the national musician of Hungary, rank and superiority over all competitors. Whenever a particular air is called for, the Gipsy only asks for the first few tones to be whistled or sung to him; during which he toys with the strings, then, making a sign that he already knows his part, he plays it off with the same exactness, as if some invisible hand held the notes before him; and on this he prides himself not a little.

Besides the many small strolling bands of ragged *Morres* who gain a living by their art in towns, inns, at weddings and at fairs, there are others, more respectable and numerous, who are kept in the pay of the magnates and rich landed proprietors and dwell in their castles, playing during dinner and on other occasions. These bands are clad in the Hungarian costume; and usually con-

sist of twelve performers, namely, eight violins, two clarionets, one bass-viol, and a cymbal.

The harvest time of these musicians is winter, during which season most of the weddings amongst the people take place. Long before that period the Gipsy enjoys in imagination the abundant meals and copious draughts which await him, as an important person at those festivals. It may fairly be stated that his life, during two of the winter months, is a continual wedding feast. Certainly only the elastic constitution of Gipsies could bear the unceasing uproar and want of rest to which they are then exposed; they, however, become so habituated to playing that they can doze on their seats round the large ovens without once losing time or stopping in their performance. Such bands number three or four persons, not unfrequently a *Dade* with his *Purdés*.

As we have already remarked, the Gipsy by means of his violin exercises great power over the feelings of his auditors. Of this he is well aware; for he often approaches one or other of them, and whilst giving the air a pathetic turn, that vibrates through every nerve, he asks *naïvely*: "Do you not feel it?" The person thus addressed, who understands the implied challenge, and is in truth enraptured with the strains, rarely lets the musician go without ample remuneration.

In the ancient *Rákóczi* march the Gipsy displays the full force of his art. This martial air, a masterpiece of its kind, which the Magyars can never listen to without enthusiasm mingled with sadness, was compiled more than two hundred years since from old popular war songs by a favourite Gipsy musician of Prince George Rákóczi, and since then has often inspired and accompanied that nation in their countless battles.

Among the brown composers many have acquired lasting celebrity in Hungary. The names of Bihari, Bunkó, Boka, Martinovics, &c., are familiar in the mouths of the people; one of whom, Barna Mihály, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was made musical director to Cardinal Emeric Count Csáky, who had his portrait painted, and himself wrote beneath it: "*Magyar Orpheus*," the Hungarian Orpheus.

When his violin is less in demand, that is to say, during the summer months, the Gipsy takes to his hammer, and the brown Apollo is transformed to a sooty Vulcan. He is a skilful smith, particularly in horse-shoeing and manufacturing nails, knives, steels, &c., which alone would enable him to gain an ample livelihood, were he not apt to throw his hammer aside in the midst of his work, and lie down either to smoke or to sleep. He makes the fire on the ground, at which he plies his

trade cross-legged, on anvils, which are often pieces of stone, assisted by his wife and children, who work the bellows. No sooner has he fashioned a part of the old iron he has collected or occasionally stolen into nails and other small goods than each member of the family takes his portion and runs off with it to the village, where it is sold or bartered for bread, bacon, eggs, &c. He also engraves seals, mends kettles, and, when living in forests, makes wooden wares.

In several parts of the country he likewise washes gold found in the rivers. For this permission he pays eight shillings yearly to the treasury, and has to deliver up all the gold he collects at a stipulated price. The manipulation thereof is very simple. A board of limewood, three feet long by one broad, in which fifteen to twenty notches are cut, is used for washing the sand; the gold drops into the notches, and is then thoroughly cleaned in troughs filled with water. The boards are occasionally covered with flannel, the better to gather up the minute particles of the precious metal. At the time of the heavy rains in the mountains, when the rivers are swollen, the gold-washing is the most productive.

Pilfering is the innate, darling occupation of the *Morre*. Wherever he goes or stays, and whatever he is about, he keeps a sharp eye upon everything

he can carry off unobserved; and the shamefacedness with which he denies his deed is truly amazing. On one occasion a Gipsy, whilst in the presence of a nobleman, skilfully pocketed his watch, which was lying on the table. The owner, hearing a ticking at the Gipsy's side, asked what the sound proceeded from. Whereon the thief replied, with perfect self-possession: "From my spurs;" although he was barefooted. A *Morre*, sent to prison for horse-stealing, when asked what he had to say in his defence, replied, with an air of injured dignity: "I did not steal the horse; the horse stole me. As I was walking through a hollow way, I saw a horse lying across the path. Owing to the steep slopes of the ravine I could not pass without coming in contact with him, and I thought to myself, if I walk by his head he will bite me; if by his tail he will kick; so I decided to step over him: at the very moment I did so, the wild animal sprang upon his legs and ran off with me in spite of all my efforts to stop him."

As the *Morre* loves his ease better than work, he often remains in his hut sleeping, and despatches his wife and children in quest of provisions. The hungry foragers sally forth to one of the neighbouring villages either to beg, tell fortunes, or sell their small wares; and whilst the mother occupies the attention of the inhabitants by her volubility.

the *Purdés* prowl about and steal whatever comes within their reach.

When telling fortunes—a monopoly of the women—they offer amulets of leaven with curious hieroglyphics and charmed knots for sale, which are to bring certain luck to the possessor in gambling, love and such like hazardous affairs. When begging, they sing and dance, making diverse comic gestures, between times throwing somersets, and poising themselves upon their heads.

Other branches of their industry consist in the discovery of stolen goods and in doctoring cattle. In the first instance it is readily to be conceived that the Gipsy, who is perhaps himself the thief, or, from his connexion with all the vagabonds and thieves in the neighbourhood is well informed on such points, may, without the aid of the black art, seem to possess a supernatural power in detecting the stolen property. When called upon for help by the party who has been robbed, he assumes an air of mystery, offering his aid for a due reward to be paid in advance. The oracle then usually appoints a meeting on the third day at some lonely place, for the restoration of the missing property, which is of course forthcoming, and the possessor loudly extols the Gipsy's wonderful detective power.

The cure of cows rejecting their food is intrusted

to the women, the simple owners little dreaming that they were the primary cause of the malady. The affair is conducted as follows: a Gipsy woman, acquainted or even in league with the herdsman of a drove, repairs to the pasturage where the cattle are grazing, and rubs the mouth of one of the cows with tallow, the poor animal thus becoming disgusted with every kind of food. No sooner has the farmer remarked this than he sends for the wise Gipsy woman, who, after remaining a short time in the stable with the cow, charms away its ailment, which consists simply in carefully wiping off the tallow from its mouth. The animal greedily takes its food again, and the Gipsy walks off with the reward of her double-dealing.

There is, perhaps, no business within the reach of a *Morre* better adapted to his shrewd nature than that of horse dealing, which opens to him an extensive field both in stealing as well as in cheating. His artifices in changing the appearance of a stolen horse, and in metamorphosing an old hack into a magnificent charger, are numberless. Whoever buys a horse from a Gipsy, however cheap, may be sure that, in one respect or another, he has been imposed upon.

The social life of this outlawed race bears the impress of great moral depravity. Under a tent, or in a narrow hut, containing one single room, the

whole family live, however numerous, without any furniture, even without a bed. In the middle of the room a fire, their never-failing companion, burns alike in winter and summer, over which hangs the large soup-kettle on two forked sticks. Into it they throw pell-mell all the eatables they procure during the day, consisting of the most curious medley of Gipsy dainties, from a rotten egg to a dead cat.

As soon as the boy enters manhood, he seeks for a companion among the swarthy beauties of his tribe, and after a short courtship makes his proposals to the object of his choice, the consent of parents being not much cared for by either of the parties.

On the wedding-day the bridegroom and bride don their best apparel; the former's consisting of an hussar-cloak, probably older than himself, of a red or green colour, furred and braided, and on which, if the owner be wealthy, glitter large zinc or silver buttons. The bride wears a red petticoat of many folds, and a white shirt with short full sleeves, her hair and neck adorned with copper coins. If they are not compelled to go to church, the matrimonial ceremony is performed in a hut by the *Vajda*, or by the eldest *Dade* in the band, the bridegroom pledging his faith in the following manner: —"I take thee for my hut-companion for the time

thou canst carry the *Szatyor*"—a sort of basket; that is to say, till death, for a Gipsy woman is never without her *Szatyor*, in which she collects all the odds and ends she picks up during her rambles. Another way of celebrating the rite is by the bridegroom holding the bride with one hand, while with the other he throws a jug over his head; the marriage being valid for as many years as the pieces into which the jug breaks. After the ceremony come feasting and dancing, in which each member of the tribe shares. On the third day, the merry-making terminates, and the newly-wedded couple build a hut, procure the implements for forging, and commence their domestic life, with all its piquant daily occurrences of begging, pilfering, idling, &c. The *ménage* is regarded incomplete until an old jade, and, under very favourable circumstances, even a cart is procured for the transport of the *Purdé's* and utensils.

The parents never omit to have their children baptized, repeating the ceremony, no matter whether Catholic or Protestant, as often as they, in their roving, arrive at a fresh village. This they do in order to extort rich baptismal gifts, with which the children are usually presented by their godparents, who are chosen from the wealthiest and most zealous inhabitants; but, notwithstanding the administration of all forms of Christian baptism,

the brown progeny remain as great heathens as their unbaptized ancestors. A Gipsy mother rubs the body of her baby with an ointment to give it a swarthy complexion; the little one is then exposed to the sun, or placed before the fire to complete the darkening process. The parents are much attached to their children, and infanticide is unknown among them. Whenever the authorities want to compel a Gipsy to confess some misdeed or other, they have only to carry off his *Purdés*, and they are sure to gain their point.

In removing from place to place, which they do without regret, without casting back one sad farewell glance, they always destroy their huts, that all traces of their existence may disappear with them.

The migration and the encampment of those nomades called "Wallachian Gipsies," who are allowed to remain only for three days within the landmark of a village, afford many an enlivening and peculiar scene. The procession, often consisting of ten to fifteen families, is headed by the old *Vajda* on horseback, followed by horses laden with every sort of chattel, and accompanied by the men on foot; tall, robust fellows, clad in dirty shirts and drawers, the head and feet bare, each carrying a bundle, and vociferating in a most animated manner. Then come the carts, covered with tarpauling, and dragged at a slow pace by worn-out

backs. From each of the vehicles a dozen *Purdés*, with their large glistening eyes, peep forth, one singing, another crying; some wrestling, or trying to play on different instruments; others conversing with their mothers, who walk by the side of the carts, generally leading a *Purdé* in either hand, most of them having also babies on their backs. On arriving at the banks of a river, near a village, the caravan stops, and for several moments a noisy, bustling scene ensues, until each family has found the spot best fitted for their tents. Hereupon, as on a given sign, the whole tribe swarm like locusts into the village, where, in defiance of locked doors and savage dogs, every house is compelled to contribute to their wants. Towards evening they again assemble in the camp, preparing and consuming their spoil amidst jests and merriment. Wherever these ravenous guests make their appearance, the inhabitants of the village surround their camp with sentinels; yet, notwithstanding their precaution and vigilance, the predatory gang commits merciless ravages among the poultry.

The Gipsy despises all possessions he cannot carry along with him. For silver utensils, particularly goblets, he has a great fancy; and in general every family has a piece of plate, an inheritance from father to son, which during the march is hung in a knapsack round the *Dade's* neck, and in

the hut buried under the fire-place, to save it from being stolen.

At the demise of a member, the whole tribe weeps and howls round the corpse, whilst the most skilled *Dades* try to restore animation. After vain attempts, the *Vajda* exclaims: "He is gone!" Whereupon the corpse, without any ceremony, is committed to some lonely and quiet grave, and, after momentary mourning, the survivors continue their thoughtless existence.

There are about 40,000 Gipsies in Hungary; but they appear to be more numerous from their incessant wandering over the country. Their numbers, however, yearly decrease, owing to their receding before the tide of advancing civilisation; and they would probably soon become extinct, if new bands did not immigrate from time to time from the East.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

EVERY nation has an epoch in the annals of its past, which, more brilliant than the rest, sheds a surpassing lustre on many a succeeding age, and whereon posterity dwells at once with just pride and fond regret, particularly in the time of adversity.

That epoch for Hungary is the age of the Hunyads, ever memorable not only for a long series of heroic exploits, but even more so for its advance in civilisation and the education of the people, which transformed the land of the Magyars for a time at least into the enviable seat of the arts and sciences.

The family of Hunyad did not grow into greatness with the history of the country like many others of the nobility. It appeared suddenly like a bright meteor in the forground of events, with its founder, the brave John; disappearing with his

son Matthias, after a short but ever memorable existence, from the scene of action.

History affords rather obscure hints than authentic facts on the origin of the Hunyads; the following tradition on the subject has however been accredited by several historians.

King Sigismund, who had sullied the throne of Hungary during fifty-one years by oppression, excess and executions, and to whose career the saying, that there is seldom an evil so absolute which may not lead to some good, may fairly be applied: this King visited Transylvania during the year 1399. Having taken up his residence at the house of a wealthy noble, Sigismund was greatly pleased to find that his host, among his other treasures, possessed a very beautiful daughter. The King, as was his wont, soon became enamoured of the maiden, who cordially returned his affection. After a visit of some months, when about to leave, the royal guest presented the girl with a diamond ring, assuring her at the same time that, should she ever need his protection, she had only to come to his palace at Buda, where, on producing that token of his affection, she would at once be admitted.

A few months after the King's departure the fair Hungarian gave birth to a son, who received at his baptism the name of John. A year later the

young mother and her baby, accompanied by her brother, set out for Buda to claim the sovereign's protection for his child. During their tedious journey through the wild forests which then covered the greater part of the country, while resting by the side of a brook, the mother gave the diamond ring to her restless baby to play with. The sparkling stone attracted a raven who, as it is well known, has a great liking for shining objects. The bird suddenly pounced upon the ring, and ere the mother could interfere had carried it off. Great was her terror at this daring theft. Luckily the raven did not fly away, but remained perched upon a neighbouring tree apparently absorbed in examining its booty. The brother, a skilful marksman, lost no time in seizing his crossbow, and aimed so well at the winged pilferer that he fell pierced by the arrow to the ground. The travellers reached the capital without further accident, and by means of their talisman quickly gained admission to the royal presence. Sigismund received them with much kindness, and was so greatly amused at the account of their adventure that he named the child Corvinus; *corvus* signifying raven in Latin. He likewise invested the family with the rank of Hungarian nobles, and presented little John with the castle and hereditary estates of Hunyad in Transylvania; giving him for his armorial bearings

a raven pierced by an arrow, holding a ring in its beak. Subsequently John became the renowned Hungarian hero, and the scourge of the Turks.

It would be difficult to say whether he was greater as a citizen or warrior. Of a simple and true-hearted character, he rose above the lower passions which so often darken and entangle the career of the most celebrated men. Fortune, therefore, never made him arrogant, and in adversity he remained unshaken. The best proof of the high estimation his merits were held in by his countrymen is that, though of illegitimate descent; yet, owing to his superior abilities and unimpeachable character, he was chosen governor of the realm during the minority of King Ladislaus V., with the consent of the haughty magnates, each of whom considered himself a king. For six years Hunyad held this distinguished but onerous office, devoting every moment of his time to the service of his country, whether on the battle-field against the Turks and Austrians, or on the judge's bench. His contemporaries say of him that standing or sitting, on foot or on horseback, everywhere justice was his sole aim and practice. Even Sultan Mohamed, whom Hunyad had so signally defeated at Belgrade, at the tidings of his death, exclaimed, that in him the world had lost a citizen rarely to be met with. His active and eventful life closed

as it began with a victory over the most formidable foe of the cross, the Turks. The battle was fought near and on the ramparts of Belgrade, which was besieged by them. Supported by his zealous and eloquent friend the Franciscan monk, John Capistran, Hunyad with an army of peasants put the countless hosts of the Turks to the rout.

But the victory was dearly bought, for it cost the country the life of their greatest hero. Exposed to the incessant hardships of the camp, Hunyad caught the ague, and within three weeks of his admirable feat of arms was carried off in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

The noble warrior, when feeling the approach of death, summoned his two sons, Ladislaus and Matthias, to his bedside, and, tenderly blessing them, requested his venerable friend, Capistran, to bless them too. The monk complied. Yet, while he held his hands but a short time over Ladislaus' head, he offered up his prayers long and fervently for the younger Matthias, whose brilliant destiny, as future king of Hungary, he with a prophetic eye seemed to read in his expressive features.

John Hunyad committed his sons to the peculiar care of King Ladislaus, in the full persuasion that they could find no better and more faithful protector than the man whom he had preserved upon the throne. The honest father, however,

could not have intrusted them to a more fickle and treacherous guardian. The visible attachment of the people to the young brothers, in whom they saw all their father's virtues revive, awoke a bitter jealousy in the sovereign's breast, which was sedulously fomented by his uncle and sole counsellor, the Austrian Count Cilly. This ambitious and perverse courtier most cordially detested John Hunyad for his noble character and distinguished position, and after his death transferred his hatred to the two scions of that name. In a secret conference with the Prince of Serbia, another enemy of the Hunyads, he decided to extirpate the entire race on the first favourable occasion. The letter, however, which Cilly sent to the Prince of Serbia, and wherein he openly expressed his intention of taking the life of the two brothers, fell into the hands of Ladislaus Hunyad, then commander of the fortress of Belgrade. This happened just at the time when Cilly, accompanied by the King and a strong body of Austrians, repaired to the fortress for the accomplishment of his infamous designs. Ladislaus, already aware of the conspiracy, threw open the gates to the King and his followers; but refused to admit foreign soldiers on the plea of the existing laws, which prohibited the frontier fortresses from being garrisoned with any other than native troops. The day after the arrival

of the Count, while the King was at mass, Ladislaus had an interview with Cilly, whereat he produced the latter's own intercepted letters, which irrefragably proved his treachery. The Austrian Count, as insolent and proud as ever, after a few angry words drew his sword and wounded the defenceless Ladislaus on the head and hand. The youth, much stronger than his adversary, seized him with so firm a grasp that Cilly could no longer use his weapon. The noise attracted some of the attendants of the brothers, who, seeing the danger of their beloved master, cut down the assassin on the spot.

Hunyad fully justified his conduct to the King, who, though much terrified, at the same time acknowledged the necessity of his self-defence, and with apparent sincerity forgave the commander.

From Belgrade the King went to Temesvár, then in possession of the widow of John Hunyad, Elizabeth Szilágyi. She received him habited in deep mourning, and craved forgiveness for the unhappy occurrence at Belgrade. The King swore upon the Host never to avenge the death of Cilly on either of the Hunyads, and presented the widow and her sons, as a sign of his undiminished favour towards their illustrious family, with rich garments of purple and gold. No sooner, however, did the King return to Buda, than, at the instigation of

other evil counsellors, among whom was Palatine Gara, the father-in-law of Ladislaus Hunyad, the young sovereign changed his mind, and caused the two brothers, who, trusting in his princely word and honour, had accompanied him thither, to be arrested on the plea of high treason; and without farther investigation issued a death-warrant against the elder of them. Scarcely a day was permitted to elapse, ere he was hurried from his prison to the square of St. George at Buda, and there beheaded within sight of the King's palace, who himself witnessed the execution from his windows. Ladislaus, then in his twenty-fourth year, was of an athletic figure, with a fair complexion and long wavy hair. His imposing and calm bearing, together with the popular feeling of veneration for his name, so excited the executioner, that he struck thrice with his sword without a fatal result. After the third stroke, the youth had sufficient strength and presence of mind left to rise and to declare that he had already endured the extreme severity of the law, which pronounced the culprit, after three unsuccessful strokes, free from all farther punishment; even when guilty of the greatest crime: at the same time he solemnly summoned the perjured King to meet him before God's tribunal within a year and a day. As he stepped forwards to address the people, he stumbled

over his long purple robe presented to him by the King at Temesvár, and fell to the ground, when the executioner, at the command of the sovereign, dealt a fourth desperate stroke, thereby severing his head from his body.

The news of this horrible murder spread like wildfire throughout the country, and the people, headed by Hunyad's uncle, the powerful Szilagyi, rose in arms to avenge the undeserved fate of the young hero. The King, cowardly in danger as insolent in prosperity, escaped from the Capital to Vienna, and from thence to Prague, in Bohemia, dragging Matthias Hunyad with him as prisoner. In Prague, while awaiting the arrival of his bride, Nemesis overtook him, and he fell a victim, as the people said, to remorse for the unkingly deed he had perpetrated a year and a day before on the unfortunate Hunyad.

On the sudden decease of their monarch, the Magyars, assembled upon the Rákos-field at the outskirts of Pesth, to elect a new sovereign. After a short discussion, the nation, in remembrance of the undying merits of his father, unanimously proclaimed Matthias Hunyad King, on the 24th of January, 1458.

At the time of his election Matthias was at Prague, a prisoner in the hands of Podiebrad, King of Bohemia, little dreaming of the dignity

the Diet had conferred on him. When Podiebrad learnt the fact from a deputation of Hungarians, he at the dinner table greeted Matthias as King of Hungary, and after betrothing him to his daughter, permitted him to depart for Buda, where the youthful sovereign celebrated his fifteenth birthday. The manner in which he seized the reins of government justified the most sanguine expectations of the people, who could not have intrusted their welfare to better hands.

Matthias, himself a descendant of the people, whose noblest type he was, had early acquired, by wise lessons and by sad experience, an acute judgment unusual to his years, and a steadfastness of purpose, which nothing could divert from the straight course. He added to the heroism of his father the higher virtues of a wise ruler, and rendered the throne what it ever ought to be, the refuge of the wronged and oppressed. An unflinching sense of justice and predilection for the sciences were the chief ornaments of his character and of his time. As a boy, he pleaded in the presence of his father the cause of a poor widow who had been oppressed by the lord of her tenure, with so much fire and justness, that he succeeded in obtaining a sentence in favour of the wronged woman, which at that time was no easy task. His taste for the classic authors was equally remark-

able; while reading them he forgot both food and sleep. His thirst after knowledge was fostered by the numerous learned men who assembled at his court, and who, like the Greeks after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, brought the treasures of ancient literature to Hungary, where they were received and entertained by Matthias in a princely manner. The influence of mental culture was not limited to the King's court. From his palace and the university, the centre of learning, the light of knowledge gradually spread over the land by means of gratuitous instruction; finding access alike to the castle and the hut. Schools were founded in Preszburg, Waitzen, Great Wardein, Erlau, Gran, &c., on the plan of the university of Buda; and the printing-machine recently imported from Germany to the Capital could not supply half the demands even of the schools. The King also kept a host of copyists, well skilled in penmanship, in constant pay, who, either in his palace or during their travels, were employed in collecting or transcribing the most valuable books for his library, which by degrees rose to the number of fifty thousand volumes, bound in gold, silver and velvet. Thus, while his armies protected the boundaries of his extensive realm, rendering the Hungarian name abroad both great and feared; another army, that of the pioneers

of science, battled successfully with ignorance and prejudice. The culture and prosperity of the nation attained a height hitherto unknown. The habits and manners of the people became softened and refined, and the Magyars, accustomed solely to the wild excitement of war or martial sports, now saw with astonishment, tinged with pleasure, their beloved sovereign pass his leisure hours in the halls of the magnificent palace he had built at Buda, surrounded by scholars of all nations; and thus a noble emulation to follow in the same course sprung up amongst them. The most glorious era of Greece and Rome seemed to revive on the banks of the Danube and the Theiss.

Matthias sought and found his greatest glory in the happiness of his people. He respected their love of liberty, well aware that it kept the national spirit alive, and afforded the mightiest engine for promoting his vast schemes. Living much among the peasants, he became thoroughly acquainted with their wants and inclinations, and could thus the better provide for their well-being. Consideration and kindness characterised all his dealings with them. On one occasion, when travelling through the county of Gömör, he heard many complaints against the oppression of the magnates. Several of them chancing to be in attendance on him, he conducted them into a vineyard, and taking a hoe,

commenced working, and desired the nobles to follow his example. They complied, but soon left off, alleging that the exertion was too great for them. Whereupon the King remarked: "Now you have some idea of the hard life of the poor peasant, who toils for your benefit. Treat him, therefore, with kindness and forbearance; lest you destroy the source of your wealth, and thus be compelled to perform the work yourself."

During Matthias's long reign, scarcely a year passed without a war with one of his many neighbours; of whom the Turks were the most formidable, and the Austrians the most turbulent. The former, after having been defeated in several campaigns, were glad to obtain a lengthened peace; not so, however, with Frederick IV. Emperor of Germany and Duke of Austria, who so repeatedly warred and marauded along the western borders, that at last he drew down upon himself the vengeance of the Magyar king. Seeing no end to this vexatious petty warfare, Matthias with three armies invaded Austria, chased away her Duke, and having reduced the smaller fortresses, he also captured Vienna, the Capital, on the twenty-second of January 1485, assuming the title of a ruler of Austria and granting the people a constitution similar to that of Hungary.

Matthias's daring courage may be the best ga-

thered from the fact, that, during the siege of Vienna, he several times entered the town in disguise, and held conferences with his friends in a place called to this day the "Court of Matthias;" and where on one occasion he was well nigh caught by a patrol of the garrison. Another instance will afford a similar proof of his undaunted bravery. At the siege of the fortress of Szabacs in Serbia, he was overtaken by a Turkish ambassador, who had boasted of his persuasive powers, and promised his master, the Sultan, to bring Matthias round to his own way of thinking. The King, aware of this, appointed the most exposed part before the fortress for their meeting place; when the envoy, seeing a shower of bullets pouring upon them from the walls, was so much terrified that the source of his eloquence was entirely dried up. He could only stammer: "The Sultan sends his greeting! The Sultan sends his greeting!" Matthias laughed heartily at the increasing fear and confusion of the Mussulman, and remarked to the bystanders: "Is it possible that such fools dare to stand in sight of our irresistible arms?"

It is no marvel that under such an intrepid leader the Hungarian army came off victorious from every engagement. Matthias was the first sovereign in Europe who kept a standing army, his celebrated Black Legion, in pay. With the soldiers he was as

popular as with the scholars. He knew many by name, and, from living on terms of familiarity with them when in camp, their devotion as well as enthusiasm for their heroic sovereign were unbounded.

The last years of his life Matthias passed at Vienna, where he died from a stroke of apoplexy on the sixth of April 1490, after a reign of thirty-two years, leaving no legitimate heir to the throne.

Matthias was of middle height and vigorous frame. He had dark curly hair, a swarthy complexion, large black eyes glowing with the fire of genius, an aquiline nose and small compressed lips. His commanding appearance bespoke at once the energetic and unflinching will which animated all his actions.

His just, upright and chivalrous character made him the idol of the people. The tradition of his virtues is handed down, like a holy relic, from father to son, and still lives in the grateful memory of posterity in the following saying: "King Matthias is gone, and with him justice." His time was Hungary's Golden Age, often sung of by poets and oftener still regretted and recalled by the sorrowing nation.

An illegitimate son, John Corvin, inherited his name and many of his great qualities; but he was, unhappily for the country, rejected as king at the

ensuing election. In spite of this mortification John Corvin devoted his military talents as Ban of Croatia in the defence of his land, and remained the terror of the Turks up to the time of his early decease. He left a son and a daughter, Christopher and Elizabeth. The former soon followed his father to the grave, and the latter, heiress to his large possessions, became the wife of the son of John Zápolya, afterwards King of Hungary.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE IRON AGE.

THE Hungarian nation received from Providence the honourable, but extremely difficult mission: the defence of civilisation against the fanaticism of the East, and the upholding of religious and political freedom against the incessant aggressive attempts of their own kings, the Hapsburgs.

In the long contest for these, the noblest pillars of humanity, the Hungarians fully proved both their vital power and heroic descent, showing themselves, under circumstances of the greatest peril, worthy of their gigantic task. When assailed from all sides, they with transcendent devotion stood at bay, and fought and fell, and shed their heart's blood upon their shattered bulwarks, whilst other nations grasped and enjoyed the fruit of their self-sacrifice.

Hence the history of that nation from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century is, like the diary of a light-house, filled with accounts of storms and

devastation, the result, in this case, of the wild passions of men: and thus more destructive in their effects, than the transient wrath of the elements. Countless were the losses of the people during that melancholy period. There was no family in the land but had to mourn one or more of its members as martyrs to liberty; every field, hill and town witnessed one or other of the sanguinary encounters. Every plot of land is hallowed by some glorious deed — some disastrous occurrence. Thus the memory of this long series of misfortunes became indelibly impressed upon the otherwise cheerful character of the Magyars. Their national songs and traditions are saddened by the chill breath of history, and in their sweet melodious music vibrate the deepest tones of woe and exultation; fraught as it were with the groans of the dying and the huzzas of the victors. In all they do or say, an hereditary wailing for bygone glory and greatness is apparent. Had not their unswerving love of freedom upheld their spirits and cheered them after every defeat, they must have long ago succumbed to the strokes of an adverse fate.

The ascent of the Hapsburgs to the Hungarian throne was the beginning of Hungary's Iron Age. This event was unfortunately coeval with the great Reformation, which spread over the land of the Magyars with such rapidity and success, that half

a century after its entrance, more than three-fourths of the nobility and the people had embraced the tenets of the new faith. It was, therefore, Liberty in two forms against which the Austrian rulers in Hungary arrayed their armies, and brought to bear all the weapons which both blind fanaticism and unscrupulous despotism could devise. What the devastating arms of the Moslems had left intact, fell a prey to the oppression and extortion of the Christians. The Spanish, Italian, and German soldiers—even greater savages than the Turks themselves—were during their inroads accompanied by troops of spiritual bandits, the Jesuits; the traces of their united ravages being still visible in the scars that disfigure the annals of those ages, although the wounds themselves have long since been healed.

In the brilliant array of leaders who devoted their intellect and sword, their possessions and life to the cause of the nation in its time of need, are names, whose sound will ever thrill through the heart of the Hungarians with mingled enthusiasm and grief, and awake the memory of events at once august and tragical. A Gabriel Bethlen, a Stephen Bocskai, an Emeric Tököli, those scourges of the perjured Hapsburgs, will evermore be admired and regretted as the noblest and most disinterested supporters of the Protestant faith and national

independence. But there is another name standing still higher in the esteem of the people, and holding a yet dearer place in their affections. And this name is RÁKOCZI. The members of that illustrious and heroic race did not, like a flash of lightning, vanish after a short career from the stormy and dark horizon of their country, but from father to son in an unbroken line, for more than a century, constituted the very core of the nation's life; acting, suffering, and rejoicing with the people during all the dramatic vicissitudes their country underwent. Their history is therefore full of the most exciting episodes: it is in truth a succession of warlike romances, closing only when the last scion of that family had disappeared from the stage of life.

The family of Rákóczi date from the time of the Arpáds. Their princely estates were chiefly situated on the banks of the Theiss in Upper Hungary, where in their castles of Sárospatak, Szerencs and Munkács, many family relics are still preserved with almost religious veneration. The first Rákóczi who attained historical celebrity and opened the list of national leaders, was Sigismond. He was the friend and companion of Stephen Bocskai, and as one of his Generals fought at his side against Austria. After the death of his friend in 1606, Rákóczi at an advanced age was chosen

Prince of Transylvania, and called from his castle of Sárospatak to the throne by a deputation of the states. After a reign of eight years, seeing storms fast gathering over his land, he resigned in favour of the young and energetic Gabriel Bethlen, devoting himself to the education of his son, George I. The latter, having signalised himself by his great military abilities under the command of Bethlen in the wars with the Hapsburgs, was in 1632 elected Prince of Transylvania, and after a successful campaign against Austria in 1644, chosen Prince of Hungary. He was succeeded in 1649 by his equally warlike and patriotic son, George II.; who struggled at fearful odds against Leopold I. and his allies the Poles, and fell in 1664 in a battle near Kolosvár, after performing marvels of bravery. His son Francis, a very promising youth, and an ardent patriot, came in contact with the Palatine Vesselényi, Zrinyi, Ban of Croatia, and other leading men of the period at the baths of Trencsén; where he likewise became acquainted with Helena, the daughter of Zrinyi, one of the noblest and most remarkable women in the annals of Hungary. After a short courtship she was betrothed to Rákóczi whilst still at the baths; and in 1666 their marriage took place at Sárospatak, attended by a great number of nobles from all parts of the country, who on that occasion concerted a

plan for a general rising. But owing to the treachery of the Turks the scheme proved an utter failure. All the chiefs were captured in the act of assembling their troops, and beheaded at Neustadt, excepting Rákóczi, who was fortunate enough to purchase his life and freedom from the Austrian ministry for the sum of 40,000*l*. Yet he did not long enjoy his rescued existence. He died suddenly in 1667, in his twenty-second year, from the effects of poison administered by the Austrians; leaving behind a widow in the bloom of youth, and two children Juliana and Francis. Rákóczi fortunately did not live to see the fearful judgment pronounced upon the nation by Leopold I., that Attila of Hungarian independence. The Hapsburgs in 1671, as in 1849, abolished the constitution, slaughtered the leaders of the people, burdened them with exorbitant taxes, and inundated the country with foreign troops. John Ampringen, Grand Master of the order of the Teutonic Knights, was appointed Governor-general of the land, and invested with full power to eradicate every trace of the Protestant faith. Political and religious persecutions were now the order of the day. Not even women were exempt from the vengeance of the court-martials. The most illustrious were thrown into prison, and otherwise ignominiously treated. Amongst them the beautiful Maria Szécsi,

widow of the executed Palatine Vesselényi, made herself conspicuous by her indomitable courage. Well aware of what her fate would be were she tamely to submit, she, in her rocky fastness of Murány, fearlessly bade defiance to the summons and threats of the enemy, and withstood a siege of several months. Want of provisions at last compelled her to surrender; but on the express condition of being for the future left in undisturbed possession of the fortress. No sooner, however, were the besiegers masters of her person, than she was conducted prisoner to Vienna and kept in close confinement to the end of her days.

Whilst Hungary by such treatment was brought to the brink of ruin and despair, the widow of Rákóczi, now the acting representative of that family, lived at Munkács, under the strict surveillance of her bigoted stepmother. There she occupied herself with the education of her children, whose impressionable minds she filled with undying love for their country and ineffaceable hatred to Austria; and impatiently awaited the day when her fatherland would again rise to eject its sanguinary oppressors. In 1676 that day at length arrived, and Helena was destined to play an important part in the coming contest.

Among the magnates who, owing to their liberal principles, were marked out by Austria as her vic-

tims, was Count Tököli, a rich Protestant nobleman of Upper Hungary. Although keeping strictly aloof from politics, a band of mercenaries unexpectedly surrounded his castle, where he dwelt with his young and promising son Emeric, and summoned him to surrender. Such a summons was then tantamount to a death warrant. This Tököli knew, and in order to save at least his only child, he vigorously resisted the demand of the band, and thus gained time to forward Emeric's escape by means of a subterranean passage. After the soldiers had stormed the castle, they put the Count and the entire household to the sword; but they searched in vain for the son, who in the company of a trusty retainer safely reached Polish soil, where his family held extensive possessions. From thence he passed over to Transylvania, to the court of the then reigning prince Abafi. Emeric Tököli combined in his character all the higher qualities, which so well adapted him for leading on a nation to a glorious destiny. Under the pressure of adversity, his inborn genius developed itself with such marvellous rapidity, that at an age when others scarcely begin to look seriously upon life, he was already the idol of his countrymen, the proudest, the most experienced of them, willingly acknowledging the superiority of the kingly boy. Such, indeed, was their confidence in his military abili-

ties, that when, in 1676, the national standard was raised, he at the age of twenty-one was unanimously elected Commander-in-chief. The young leader pressed forwards from Transylvania, overthrowing the hostile forces wherever they attempted to check his irresistible advance. The first object of his campaign was the liberation of the fair widow of Rákóczi, whom he already silently admired, from the bondage of her stepmother. Near Munkács, within sight of the lady of his love, he defeated an Austrian corps; by this victory gaining access to her in the impregnable fortress. An intercourse of a few days sufficed to inspire those two heroic and noble beings with an undying attachment for each other; and they determined that whatever the portentous future had in store for them they would meet it with united energy. Thus animated with love for Helena and his country, Tököli set out for the conquest of Hungary, and, after several campaigns, fulfilled his task by chasing the Austrians from Hungarian ground. In the zenith of his glory he returned to Helena to receive the highest reward at her hands, and they were united in marriage at Munkács in 1682.

From that moment the high-minded Princess seldom left her husband's side, sharing with him, in the company of her children, the hardships and excitement of the ensuing war. Her beauty and ac-

complishments shed an additional lustre on the throne, to which, in the midst of his triumphs, Tököli was summoned, as Prince of Hungary, by the nation and confirmed by the Sultan; and when soon afterwards fortune frowned upon him, and consequently his friends fell off one after another, her unflinching spirit and solemn enthusiasm aided him to rise far above the reach of common destiny. The defeat of the Turks under the walls of Vienna and in several subsequent battles, involved Hungary in disasters which not even the genius of Tököli could avert. At that juncture Helena left her husband to take command of Munkács, their strongest fortress on the Upper Theiss. But while she was making preparations for a life and death struggle, Tököli, calumniated by Austria in the sight of the Sultan, was carried off to Constantinople, and though speedily liberated and reinstated in his former honours, the Hungarian cause had during his absence received a shock from which it never recovered.

Meanwhile, to attain the object of his ambition —the establishment of unlimited power over Hungary—the Emperor had once more recourse to terrorism. Accordingly, court-martials were reinstated with increased rigour. The Neapolitan General Caraffa, whose name even now is pronounced as the most fearful curse by the people, was appointed

chief executioner. That he might not be foiled in his work of destruction, he was provided with a writ in the Emperor's own hand, whereof a few words may be quoted to show the bitter enmity the Hapsburgs at all times bore towards the Magyars. "We cannot refuse petitioners access to our throne; in the meantime you will pay no attention to any of our letters of pardon, but press on without forbearance or mercy towards your well-known aim." With such a safeguard in his pocket and not a human feeling in his heart, Caraffa set to work. The two hundred and fifty Protestant ministers who, under pretext of a synod had previously been convoked at Presburg, were after a long martyrdom partly executed in prison and partly sold as slaves to the Spanish galleys. But it was in Eperies that Caraffa's ferocious nature was fully brought to light. The wholesale executions perpetrated there are commemorated in history as the "Butcheries of Eperies." This town, formerly the centre of the Protestant movement in Upper Hungary, supported Tököli's efforts with indefatigable zeal, and surrendered only after every hope of relief had vanished, upon honourable capitulation. Like a second Alva, Caraffa marched into the conquered town, his stern and sinister look portending no good to the wretched inhabitants. The hundredfold arrests were quickly followed up

by decimations; and in March 1687 alone, twenty-three of the wealthiest nobles, among whom was Ketzer, the Cato of Hungary, were impaled and quartered, three and four at a time, that Caraffa might at leisure enjoy the tortures of his victims.

The wives of the executed Ketzer and of his brother-in-law hastened to Vienna to implore the clemency of the Emperor, at least as far as the restoration of their property was concerned. Leopold spoke to them most condescendingly, and carried his magnanimity so far as to give the bereaved women 40*l.* for their travelling expenses, taking, however, due care to keep possession of their enormous possessions, which amounted to 100,000*l.*

While arrests and executions on a formidable scale thus went on in rapid succession, striking horror and despair into every heart, while Tököli himself was dragged a prisoner from his country, and his armies everywhere met with reverses: his wife, braving all dangers, shut herself up with her children in the rocky fortress of Munkács, and at the head of a handful of trusty retainers defied the attempts of the besiegers to subdue her by force of arms. No promises, no threats could shake her constancy. She replied alike to proposals of pardon, as to attacks by the mouth of her guns, and thus sustained a siege of more than two years. At length, the last loaf being consumed and the last

bullet fired, she opened her gates; but not until she had stipulated to retain possession of her estates, the guardianship of her children and free residence in Hungary. But what protection can parchments afford against force and perjury? Scarcely had she delivered up her fortress than she was summoned to Vienna. The mortifications which the noble princess was subjected to after her surrender began ere she set foot in the Capital of Austria. At the gates she was kept for three hours, together with her followers, waiting the Emperor's pleasure; and when allowed to enter the town, it was only to be shut up in one of the Ursuline convents in the suburbs. Her children were subsequently torn from her, and intrusted to the care of Cardinal Collonics, an arrant Jesuit, who placed Juliana in another convent, and sent her brother Francis to Bohemia to be educated in a college of Jesuits.

After Helena had endured a severe imprisonment of three years, she was exchanged in 1692 for the Austrian General Heuster, whom Tokoli had defeated and captured during one of his inroads into Transylvania, and permitted to join her husband in Turkey. Though Tökŏli had carried on the war with all the energy and skill that characterised him throughout his eventful career; yet his star seemed fast setting, and the Princess arrived there but to see how his superhuman efforts were baffled by

both the apathy and treachery of his allies the Turks; until the peace of Karlovicz, between the latter and Austria, for ever put an end to his already waning hopes. The reunion of the illustrious pair took place at Constantinople, from whence they proceeded to Nicomedia, where they lived in utter solitude; their ardent energies sustaining them during a weary exile of many years. Helena at length succumbed, and the devoted wife and patriot breathed her last at the metropolis of Bythynia in 1703. In foreign soil she found that repose which even in death was denied to her in the land of her birth. The loss of such a companion struck Tököli's life at the very root. Overwhelmed by sorrow, poverty and illness, broken in body, though unshaken in mind, he welcomed the hand of death, that in 1705 closed the career of one of Hungary's greatest men.

The good seed, however, that Helena had so sedulously planted in the hearts of her children, in due time produced an abundant harvest. Persuasion as well as threats were alternately employed to induce Juliana, her eldest child, to take the veil. But the young girl strenuously resisted both the one and the other, and was at length released from farther persecution by that most powerful of allies, by Love. The fame of her beauty and sufferings, perhaps even exaggerated by the romantic colour-

ing with which all the incidents of her life were invested, spread in spite of locks and walls throughout the country, and many were the nobles animated with a chivalrous devotion for the young Princess without ever having seen her.

Among the most powerful of her admirers was the Count Aspremont, Commander-in-Chief of Upper Hungary, who resolved at once to show his knightly prowess, instead of wasting his time in useless sighs and dreams. During the absence of her guardian, the Cardinal Collonics, from Vienna, Aspremont contrived to obtain the Emperor's permission to see the Princess, and was so successful in his ardent suit, that ere the Cardinal's return from Rome he had already gained both her heart and hand. Though the wife of a foreign magnate, the daughter of Helena Rákóczi to the last remained faithful to her country, rendering to her and to her sons important services, when subsequently the court renewed its jesuitical schemes for the undermining of Hungary's independence.

While his sister in so romantic a way obtained her freedom, Francis Rákóczi, four years her junior, was still in the hands of the Jesuits. In vain the latter exhausted all the subtle poison of their craft to pervert the principles of the Magyar prince. He, like his sister, was proof against their doctrines, and faithfully preserved the holy and patriotic in-

spirations imbibed in infancy from his mother's lips. Instead of allowing himself to be moulded into one of their servile tools, he became that, for which Providence had destined him: the Avenger of his country's wrongs. No sooner had he heard of his sister's marriage than he quitted the college and unexpectedly arrived at Vienna. To his guardian he expressed a wish to take the management of his affairs into his own hands, and committed them to the care of his sister, when, at the command of the Emperor, he set off on a tour in Italy. After passing a year there, he went to Germany, and married Eleanora, Princess of Hesse-Rheinfeld, who was in every respect worthy of him. By this independent step he roused the displeasure of the court to such a point, that on his return to the Capital he was arrested. His imprisonment, however, lasted but a short time, and on his liberation he received permission to reside upon his estates in Hungary. There the Prince found all his castles garrisoned by foreign troops; his every step dogged, and all his doings reported by Austrian spies. His correspondence with his mother in particular caused the Emperor and his counsellors great uneasiness.

About this time proposals were made to him on the part of France, to induce him to take up arms against Austria. It is uncertain whether he had

at that period really entertained any serious thoughts of placing himself at the head of an insurrectionary movement in his country; when the Hapsburgs themselves compelled him to hurry into the fatal path, which, as many instances had already proved, led either to the scaffold or to exile. Rákóczi had in his service as secretary, a Fleming named Lengueval, in whom he placed the fullest trust. Longueval, however, bribed by Government, not only betrayed his master's confidence, but by forging letters in the handwriting of Rákóczi, gave rise to a suspicion that he was getting up a conspiracy. Under pretext of visiting his friends in the Netherlands, Longueval left the Prince, who was shortly afterwards informed by his sister of his secretary having been arrested in Linz, and that several letters, with a list of conspirators, had been found upon him. At this intelligence, instead of seeking safety in flight, though he dwelt but a short distance from the Polish frontiers, Rákóczi, conscious of his innocence, remained quietly in Sárospatak, which he did not even quit when the news of the arrival of an order for his arrest had reached him. Thus, in 1701, his castle was invaded during the night by a battalion of Austrian troops, and Rákóczi torn from his wife's side, and immediately conveyed in his own carriage to Eperies and thence to Neustadt, where he was thrown into the very

dungeon which had been occupied by his maternal grandfather, Count Zrinyi, previous to his execution. After a confinement of six weeks, two officers were sent from Vienna to examine him, on which occasion he was confronted with his former secretary, who was so confused at the sight of his master and benefactor, that he could scarcely utter a single charge against him. The palpable innocence of the Prince would have been of no avail at court, and his destruction therefore inevitable, had not his energetic sister watched over him with a mother's love. She left no means untried to bring about his liberation, and at length succeeded in bribing the commander of his prison, who aided his escape in the uniform of a dragoon. The horse awaiting the fugitive Prince in the suburbs was shod backwards to mislead his pursuers. By means of fresh relays, kept in readiness by his numerous friends, he was enabled rapidly to cross the frontiers and to reach Polish soil. At the news of Rákóczi's escape the Government pronounced sentence of death upon him. His property was confiscated and a large price put upon his head. The alliance between Poland and Austria rendered the position of the outlawed chief still farther embarrassing; so much so, that for a long time he was compelled to wander in disguise from one to another of the nobles, to avoid the snares of his enemies.

Now, that he was declared an outlaw by Austria, Rákóczi for the first time expressed his willingness openly to espouse the cause of his fatherland. History bears record of few men better calculated to play a leading *rôle* in a nation's struggle for independence, than was Francis Rákóczi by his antecedents as well as by his position. For him no tie existed that had not been forcibly torn asunder, no feeling hallowed by nature and historical memory that was not desecrated by the house of Hapsburg. His maternal grandfather, the Ban Zrinyi, fell under the stroke of the Austrian executioner; his uncle, Peter Zrinyi, perished after a twenty years' confinement in an Austrian dungeon; his father died in the prime of manhood from Austrian poison; his admirable mother and his heroic stepfather, both victims of their ardent patriotism, lived in distant exile, pursued and proscribed by the Habsburgs; and wherever he looked he beheld his fatherland fettered, bleeding and lacerated under the rule of foreign oppressors. Truly the remembrance and the sight of such crying outrages were enough to change Rákóczi, amiable and humane though he was, into an implacable enemy of the originators of so many crimes and the chief cause of all the calamities that deluged his country.

After a residence of a year and a half in Poland, having contracted an offensive alliance with France,

Rákóczi yielded to the repeated invitations of his compatriots and determined to declare war against Austria. On the 16th of June, 1703, at the head of a detachment of Hungarian and Polish Guards, the Prince re-crossed the frontier, unfurling the standard of insurrection from the summits of the Carpathian mountains. His appearance was greeted by the entire nation rising in arms, and his ranks as he proceeded were swelled by thousands of the best patriots. A few months ago a fugitive, and now the liberator of his country, the Prince led his victorious troops under the walls of Vienna; the sound of the Hungarian bugles making his imperial rival tremble in his own Burg.

Meanwhile Leopold died, and was succeeded by his son Joseph I. Of a milder and more placable disposition than his father, the new Emperor immediately took steps to conciliate Hungary. He released Rákóczi's wife and sister, who had been thrown into prison at the beginning of the war, and made them the medium of very liberal proposals of peace to the Magyars and their chief. But these patriotic women instead of attempting to induce Rákóczi to come to terms with the Hapsburgs, secretly encouraged him to carry on the struggle. This Rákóczi did, and the result of several victorious campaigns was his election as Prince of Transylania, and in 1707 as Chief of Hungary, by the Diet

assembled at Onod, who deposed the Hapsburgs at the proposal of the French ambassador. At this time, Peter the Great of Russia, through his ambassador, offered the throne of Poland to Rákóczi, which the latter to his credit firmly and wisely declined.

The war had continued to the year 1708, when the battle of Trencsén was lost by the Hungarians, which gave an unfavourable turn to their affairs. Still strong in the affection of the nation and in his own conviction, Rákóczi remained true to his purpose and pursued his course with unremitting zeal. While his armies faced the enemy along the Theiss, he hastened to Poland to bring fresh aid and to conclude an alliance with Russia. During his absence, however, his generals, weary of the protracted warfare, lent a favourable ear to the new proposals of Joseph I., and at Szatmár, in 1710, concluded a treaty of peace without the knowledge of their chief; whereby, under the guarantee of England and Holland, the so often conquered and reconquered political and religious liberties of the nation were confirmed. The Emperor also commenced personal negotiations with Rákóczi, promising him full amnesty and the restoration of his posessions on condition that he would acknowledge himself an Austrian subject. But the Prince, justly proud of his position, and determined to struggle

on with destiny, would not hear of submission to his and the nation's hereditary foe, preferring rather to renounce his princely estates and retire into voluntary exile. He accordingly embarked at Dantsic for Hull, and thence proceeded to France, where he together with his exiled companions met with the most flattering reception from Louis XIV. A yearly pension of 100,000 livres was granted to him besides 40,000 for the support of his compatriots; moreover, to show how legitimate the French nation regarded the cause of the Magyars, they were on all occasions fêted at court, and several of the Hungarian generals received commissions in the army; one of whom, Count Bercsényi, even attained the rank of a Marshal of France.

During his stay in that country, Rákóczi lived in the society of those of the nobility celebrated for wit and bravery. He was a favourite of Mme. de Maintenon, and no party at court was thought complete without the Hungarian prince. Yet all the adulation and hospitality which the French lavished upon him could not make him forget that he was an exile; that he still possessed a fatherland for whose welfare he never for an instant ceased to care. Nowhere did Rákóczi find that genuine happiness which Home alone can afford, and thus in 1718 he quitted France, and at the invitation of

Cardinal Alberoni went to Spain, and later to Constantinople, to be nearer to his beloved country. In vain he challenged Turkey to continue the war with Austria; and as the last ray of hope of again seeing his home disappeared he withdrew to Rodosto, on the Sea of Marmora, accompanied by his two sons, Francis and George, who had been liberated from prison and permitted to join their father in exile. Having now completely resigned himself to his fate, Rákóczi with the serenity of a philosopher looked back upon the turbulent course of his past life, and possessed as he was of a thorough knowledge of men and events, he predicted that his country would enjoy neither freedom nor happiness under the rule of the Hapsburgs, and that he was not the last of the victims who in consequence of the rash truce of 1710 would be driven into indefinite exile. His presage was terribly borne out by the rising and total overthrow of Hungary in 1849. Turkey has in consequence again become the abode of outlawed Magyar patriots, as was the case at the time of the Tökölis and Rákóczis; and the homeless fugitive may now mingle his tears with the ashes of those great martyrs; and at their graves, hallowed by so many glorious recollections, learn how to live and die worthy of the name and of the cause which he is called upon to honour and to defend.

Francis Rákóczi expired in 1735, at the age of fifty-nine, leaving behind in his memoirs the best monument of his noble and disinterested character. He rests by the side of his mother, Helena Zrinyi, in the Church of St. Benoist, at Galata. At the outbreak of another war between Turkey and Austria, in 1737, the Sultan summoned the eldest son of Rákóczi to Constantinople, and conferred on him the title of a Chief of Hungary. The latter appeared at the head of a troop of horsemen at Widdin. But the Hungarians had now learnt patiently to bear the foreign yoke, and in their blindness and misplaced loyalty even to become the champions of their oppressors. Rákóczi therefore returned without result from the Hungarian borders to Constantinople, where he soon afterwards died from the effects of the plague, leaving no issue.

His brother George likewise died young and childless, and thus the noblest and mightiest family in Hungary became extinct in exile and poverty, after they had fought, bled, and suffered for more than one hundred and fifty years in their country's cause. The Rákóczis deserved a better fate, and that they deserved it, is best proved by the people still preserving a memory of them in their music, songs, and countless traditional tales, which descend from generation to generation. As long as there is a Magyar, the name of Rákóczi will never be

pronounced without a sigh of regret; without a tear of sympathy and of reverence.

The following Epitaphs form an appendix of historical interest to the foregoing sketch. The two first have been recently discovered by General Klapka in the church of St. Benoist, at Galata, where the remains of Helena Zrinyi and Francis Rákóczi are buried. That of Tököli was found a few years since by others of the Hungarian exiles in a field near Nicomedia, in Asia:—

Hic requiescit ab heroicis laboribus virilis animi mulier sexus sui ac seculi gloria celsissima Domina HELENA ZERINIA, *Zeriniæ atque Frangepaniæ gentis decus ultimum; Tökölyi Principis uxor, olim Rákóczyi utroque digna conjuge, magnis apud Chroatas Transylvanum Siculos inclyta titulis, factis ingentibus toto in orbe clarior. Varios æqua mente fortunæ casus experta, par prosperis major adversis, cumulatis christiana pietate bellicis laudibus fortem Domino reddidit animam mortem eluctata in suo florum campo ad Nicomediensem Bythyniæ sinum. Anno salutis MDCCIII., ætatis LX., die XVIII Februarii.*

Here rests from her heroic labours a woman of masculine spirit, the glory of her sex and of her century, the illustrious Lady Helena Zrinyi, the last ornament of the families of Zrinyi and Fran-

gepani, and the worthy wife of Tököli, and formerly of Rákóczi, great by her titles in Croatia, Transylvania, and Szeklerland, but still greater by her deeds of world-wide renown. Having with unshaken firmness borne all the changes of fortune, modest in prosperity and rising above adversity, uniting Christian piety with warlike fame, she gave back her soul to her Maker at her country seat near Nicomedia, in Bythynia, where she died on the 18th of February, 1703, aged sixty.

Hic requiescit FRANCISCUS II. RAKOCZI, *Dei grâtia electus Transylvaniæ Princeps, Partium Regni Hungariæ Dominus et Siculorum Comes; ætatis suæ XII. a matre avulsus, miro Divinæ providentiæ ordine per carceres, per exilia et per varia vitæ discrimina ductus, hic requiescenti matri per mortem redditus. Quietem quam vivus ignoravit in Domino reperit anno Salutis MDCCXXXV. octava Aprilis, ætatis suæ LIX.*

Here rests Francis Rákóczi II., by the grace of God, Prince of Transylvania, Lord of Part of Hungary and Count of the Szeklers. Having in his twelfth year been torn from his mother, he was by the will of Divine Providence after long imprisonment, exile, and other vicissitudes of life, reunited in death with her, whose remains likewise rest here.

The peace which in life he knew not, he found in the Lord on the 8th of April in the year of Salvation, 1735, aged fifty-nine.

Hic requiescit ab heroicis laboribus celsissimus Dominus EMERICUS TÖKÖLI DE KESMARK, *Hungariæ et Transilvaniæ Princeps, vir a rebus pro asserenda Patriæ libertate fortiter gestis tota Europa celebris; post varios fortunæ casus tandem extorris inter ipsam renascentis Hungariæ libertatis spem exilii simul at vitæ finem fecit in Asia ad Nicomediensem Bythyniæ sinum in suo florum campo. Obiit anno Salutis MDCCV., ætatis suæ XLVII., die* 13*a. Septembris.*

Here rests from his heroic labours the illustrious Lord Emeric Tököli de Kesmark, Prince of Hungary and Transylvania, a man renowned throughout Europe for his achievements, during his attempts to liberate his country. After experiencing diverse changes of fortune death surprised him, while cherishing the hope of seeing Hungary once more free. He died in exile at his country seat near Nicomedia, in Bythynia, Asia, in the year of Salvation, 1705, on the 13th of September, aged forty seven.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE NEW ERA.

THE centuries of struggle for the national existence of Hungary were followed by a period which may justly be called one of retrogression; inasmuch as it presents the melancholy picture of the nobles, formerly so patriotic and liberal, pursuing a suicidal course, by lending their powerful support to maintain the Austrian dynasty upon the Hungarian throne. It was not until the second quarter of the nineteenth century that many of them withdrew from the baneful influence of the court, and in right earnest attempted to improve the position of the people by means of salutary reforms, which on a sudden assumed, in form and effects, a European importance, when the aristocracy, with a self-sacrifice worthy the admiration of the world, admitted the entire nation within the precincts of the constitution.

The impulse to these momentous events, which produced a new era in the political life of Hun-

gary, was given by Count Stephen Szécsényi. This noble patriot's first outcry for reform was to the development of his country what the shot of the Alpine hunter is to the loosening of an avalanche. His uncommon practical sense, his fertility in resources to farther his designs, and his indefatigable zeal, acted like so many electric shocks upon the spirit of the nation, which, already predisposed, eagerly followed the bold leader and gradually brought its immense natural strength to bear upon the work of its own regeneration.

Full of confidence in the final success of his schemes, Szécsényi struck into the path of progress, and in 1826 commenced operations with gigantic energy and gigantic results. His successful career continued during twenty-two years, when the force of ensuing convulsions hurled him from the zenith of power and glory into the cell of a madhouse.

Szécsényi began his work by endeavouring to awaken in the people a taste for their own language and literature. With the aid of other patriotic noblemen he succeeded in forming the Academy of Science at Pesth, which in a short time became the focus of an extensive literary movement. The press he regarded as a not less important engine for intellectual culture, and he accordingly took great pains to establish it on a footing worthy of

the advanced political state of the country. In like manner he provided for a suitable meeting-place for the educated class from the metropolis, by establishing the magnificent Casino in Pesth on the plan of the clubs in London, to which he presented a well-selected library. The utility of this undertaking was so palpable, that Casinos and Reading-rooms sprang up in rapid succession in every county and town.

While Szécsényi thus zealously occupied himself with the mental improvement of his countrymen, he never for a moment neglected their material welfare. He introduced steam vessels on the Danube, which, in a mercantile point of view, proved of incalculable benefit to his land. He likewise entered into a treaty of commerce with England, and laboured indefatigably, like another Sir John Sinclair, for the construction of various means of communication, amongst which the splendid suspension bridge across the Danube, which connects the sister cities, Buda and Pesth, takes a prominent place. These and similar achievements—so many monuments of Szécsényi's creative genius—were hailed with unbounded enthusiasm. Many of the old people and the entire youth rushed into the new path, carrying along with them the best working and inventive elements of the nation, and numbering in their ranks the most illustrious

men of the age, as Vesselényi, Battyányi, Károlyi, Teleki, &c.

Neither did their wives remain behind them in promoting the cause of reform. The most conspicuous by birth and wealth were also its foremost champions. The names of the noble sisters, the Countesses Battyányi and Károlyi have become household words in the mouths of the people of Hungary, and their self-sacrifice and patriotism are held up by every mother as models for imitation to her children.

As is usually the case with reformers; the originator of this progressive movement was left far behind by his more ardent followers, so much so, that at a later period Szécsényi more than once attempted to keep the powerful and rapid stream within the limits he had originally traced for its course. All his caution and prudence, however, were set at nought by the unexpected events of 1848. In that year the Genius of Progress on his march from the west to the east halted in the land of the Magyars, and knocked at the door of the Diet, then assembled at Presburg, warning its members, through the medium of Kossuth's inspired oratory, that it was high time to redress the wrongs and grievances of the oppressed people. The Diet, penetrated by the justice of the warning, hastened to obey the summons with the utmost

enthusiasm; notwithstanding that by so doing they were laying the axe at the root of their hitherto most cherished privileges and interests. Both houses unanimously decided that the venerable feudal structure, the aristocratic constitution, within whose walls they now sate for the last time, and which, though faulty in its proportions, had nevertheless, by its solidity, protected the nation for a thousand years against the storms of events, that that majestic structure should be pulled down, and from its ruins, and the new materials at hand, a stupendous political edifice be raised, in whose vast precincts the entire nation, without distinction of language or religion, of position or mental culture, would find ample scope for the exercise of their social and political immunities. The work was carried on with marvellous rapidity and skill. While on one side a responsible government, free press, trial by jury, perfect equality and tolerance of every form of creed were established, on the other side, not alone all privileges and titles were abolished, but the nobility also renounced their lordly and hereditary rights on ground property, whereby the heretofore feudal tenures of the peasantry became their legitimate freehold possessions.

When this masterpiece of political workmanship was accomplished, the august body voluntarily de-

scended from their lofty pedestal, to make way for the new legislators—for the people. But not yet content with this, when the Austrian Dynasty sent its armies to raze the recently erected building to the ground, the same aristocracy took up arms and fought with their wonted transcendant heroism at the head of the people, in order to prove with what sincerity they had made those sacrifices, and how content and proud they felt in their union with their former vassals.

The ensuing contest, though of short duration, since it was confined to a ten months' campaign, is nevertheless crowded with the most remarkable battles and victories ever fought and gained for freedom on Hungary's bloodstained fields. The principal features of this struggle will be best given in the following biography of one of its leaders, whose military talents, especially as regards strategical sagacity, greatly contributed to cover the Hungarian arms with laurels, and to secure the enduring interest and admiration of the world for the heroic nation of the Magyars.

CHAPTER XIX.

GEORGE KLAPKA.

At the period of the late war, when the nation in the west had lost all the counties on the right bank of the Danube, together with the capital; in the east the whole of Transylvania; in the north Upper Hungary as far as Miskoltz; and in the south the Banat and the Bácska; until but a few counties were left along the banks of the Theiss to afford the Magyars a temporary refuge from the advancing enemy; at that momentous period, when the news of lost battles and disastrous retreats rang like so many death knells through the land, the hardest blow at the existence of the nation was struck by the defeat of the corps of the Upper Theiss at Kaschau, whereby the Austrian General Schlick made himself master of the communications leading to the Theiss as well as to Debreczen, the new seat of Government. The danger had never yet been so great, so imminent, neither the means to arrest its course so inefficient. There

was no fresh army to oppose the advancing foe from the north; and of the chiefs, who at that time were at the disposal of Government, not one would venture to lead the corps of the Upper Theiss, which, in its demoralised state, promised no possible guarantee for future success. In this emergency Kossuth offered the command to a young officer, chief of the general staff department in the war office, who had already distinguished himself both by remarkable military attainments and exalted patriotism, and who unhesitatingly accepted the onerous post. The choice fell upon the right man: upon George Klapka, the subject of our present sketch.

Kossuth, in one of his despatches, wrote thus to Klapka: "General, you possess a Roman character; and I respect in you, not only a gallant warrior, but a citizen animated by the love of liberty." This favourable opinion was fully borne out by the public acts of that excellent leader. Klapka possesses indeed a Roman character, in which the sterner qualities of a warrior are happily blended with the gentler social virtues, and though ranking amongst the foremost of the actors in a drama where austerity and unflinching energy were best calculated to raise a man above the multitude; nevertheless, even in the height of turmoil, his deeds were invariably marked by urbanity, kind-

ness, and magnanimity. Klapka's appearance likewise bears the impress of his noble mind. Lofty and elegant in figure, with a high thoughtful brow, and dark eyes, expressive at once of deep feeling and of genius; frank and courteous in manner, and animated in converse, he irresistibly wins at first sight.

As one of the youngest of the military chiefs in Hungary, Klapka had often the misfortune of being placed under men who, though older and higher in rank, were far below him in point of ability and foresight. In spite of this disadvantage, the lustre of his superior qualities shone forth whenever the exigency of the moment called them into play; and as often as he was left to act independently, as was the case in the beginning and at the end of his higher command, he showed what he could do, and what he would have done had not fate—for the time at least—so suddenly terminated his short, but brilliant career.

George Klapka, the senior of a noble family, was born on the 7th of April, 1820, at Temesvar, where his father was for many years burgomaster of the town. Even in the pastimes and occupations of his early youth Klapka exhibited an unusual inclination for the profession in which he afterwards so eminently distinguished himself. His talent for mathematics and his quickness of memory

were most surprising. For example, he would repeat by heart a row of twenty or more figures in the same order in which they had been dictated to him, without mistake or hesitation. These, as well as other like circumstances, induced his father to educate him for the military profession.

Having concluded his studies in the Gymnasium at Temesvar, Klapka was sent, in his fifteenth year, to the Artillery School at Vienna, which, after a course of three years, he quitted with the reputation of having been one of its most distinguished pupils. As a mark of honour his name was emblazoned in gold and framed, and may still be seen hanging from the walls of the examination hall. In 1842 he entered the Hungarian Noble Guard with the rank of sub-lieutenant, and there completed his military education, together with several comrades, who in the subsequent struggle attained historical fame.

While still in the Noble Guard Klapka was invited by an agent of the Prince of Lahore to take service in India as a colonel of artillery. An attack of typhus, however, which confined him for months to his bed, prevented him from giving a decisive answer.

In 1847 he left the Noble Guard, and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Austrian army. Eager for action and improvement, he soon

became weary of the monotonous life of a garrison, and in the course of the same year quitted the service for the purpose of travelling in the east. On his way thither the news of the revolutionary events in France overtook him. He instantly retraced his steps, rightly presuming that the electric shock in Paris would be felt in his own country.

On his arrival at Pesth he joined the newly established Reform Club, and there, conjointly with other patriots, worked indefatigably in the formation of a national army. At the tidings of the rebellion amongst the Serbians he entered the eventful path which in a short time led him to the summit of military renown. In June 1848, he petitioned for a commission in one of the Honvéd battalions, and was appointed captain of the sixth by the Palatine Archduke Stephan. As such Klapka marched against the Serbians, and took part in several engagements. Yet scarcely had the Austrian Generals, who at that time had the command of the Hungarian troops, remarked his rapidly unfolding talent and patriotic zeal, than they sent him on a mission to another part of the country, as a pretext to remove him from the theatre of war. At the crisis, in September, he was called back to Pesth by Count Louis Battyányi, who promoted him to the rank of major, and in-

trusted him with the important post of securing Comorn at any price for the nation. Klapka fulfilled his trust so successfully, that Jelachich, on his retreat past the fortress, found the gates closed, and the Hungarian tricolor floating on its ramparts.

During the advance of the Hungarians into Austria, and the ensuing battles, Klapka was occupied in fortifying Presburgh, and after a short sojourn there was appointed chief of the general staff of the army in the south. There, conjointly with the Generals Vetter and Kiss, he drew up a plan for capturing the numerous entrenched camps of the Serbians, and carried it out with such skill and energy that by the middle of September the entire Banat was cleared of the rebels.

On Görgey's retreat from the Upper Danube to Buda-Pesth, Klapka was recalled to the capital, and named chief of the General Staff section in the Ministry of War. In this capacity he proposed the plan for the subsequent operations, which consisted in the gradual retreat of the armies without coming to a decisive battle, and the diverting of the enemy's attention from the line of the Theiss. The punctual execution of this admirable design greatly contributed to avert the then impending destruction of Hungary's political independence.

At this time the tidings of the defeat at Kaschau arrived at Debreczen, the seat of Government, and Mészáros was replaced by Klapka in the command of the corps of the Upper Theiss. "Hold out but for fourteen days and you will save the country," said Kossuth to Klapka on his departure. The new commander did more—he defeated the enemy. We now for the first time see Klapka in the position of an independent leader; but the position was not an enviable one. The circumstances under which he commenced his operations as such were of so difficult a nature, and the moral and physical impediments with which his every step was beset so multifarious and great, that perhaps only a man with military genius and unflinching confidence such as Klapka's could have successfully overcome them all.

On his arrival at Tokaj, the then head quarters of his corps, on the 12th of January, 1849, he found but the skeletons of eight battalions, chiefly recruits, three companies of Poles, seven escadrons of hussars, and thirty guns. Demoralisation reigned on all sides. There were but few experienced officers, and of these the oldest in rank were disaffected at the appointment of so young a man as Klapka. The latter, however, soon convinced them that he was in every respect their superior; so much so, that after the first engage-

ment they were one and all transformed into his warmest admirers. He rapidly re-organised the troops, introduced strict discipline, and in a few days already stood at the head of a small corps prepared for the combat. It was fortunate that Schlick had granted the Hungarians sufficient time for the re-forming of their ranks; since, instead of following up his victory at Kaschau, and of rapidly advancing across the Theiss, he waited for two weeks until he had received considerable reinforcements from Windischgrätz. At length, on the 22nd of January, Schlick made his appearance in an impenetrable fog, which entirely masked his movements. He directed his attack with two brigades against the left wing of the Hungarians at Tarczal, a small town at the foot of the Tokaj Mountain. There, on a rising ground, Klapka stood with three battalions, four escadrons, and nine guns. The fog was so thick, that the action had scarcely commenced when all arms were at once *pêle-mêle* engaged in it. The first report of the cannon was quickly followed by an attack of the cavalry, and a close fight with the bayonet. In the midst of the unavoidable confusion Schlick for three hours battered the line of the Hungarians. But all his efforts were in vain. He was victoriously repulsed on all sides, and, like his namesake, who a hundred and fifty years before

had been defeated on the same spot and under similar circumstances by Rákóczi, the Austrian General was now compelled to retire from the field. At the moment the last Austrian columns disappeared from the horizon the fog dispersed, and the setting sun lighted up a battle-field strewn with the corpses of the enemy. A simultaneous attack of the Austrians upon Klapka's right wing, at Keresztur had been likewise successfully sustained. However unimportant the battle of Tarczal was as regards its material results, it had, nevertheless, an extraordinary moral effect upon the Honvéds who, after a series of losses, could at length boast of one advantage over a hitherto victorious as well as numerically superior adversary. That day established the confidence of the Honvéds in their leader, and also in themselves; and thus the path to fresh conquests and victories was opened.

But notwithstanding his first success, Klapka, though young and impatient to deal heavier blows at the Austrians, was cautious enough not to risk the existence of his corps on a single cast of the die in the face of an enemy who mustered 13,000 men, almost double the number of his own corps. Instead, therefore, of venturing on an inconsiderate pursuit, he remained in the vicinity of Tokaj, exercising his troops day and night, and im-

patiently awaiting the succour that had been promised him.

Finding that he was not pursued, Schlick retraced his steps, and on the 31st of January with the whole of his forces made another desperate effort to conquer the Hungarian position at Tokaj, and thus open the road to Debreczen. Klapka awaited the enemy on the left bank of the Theiss behind the town. In the course of the afternoon Schlick advanced in two columns, and opened a violent cannonade, replied to by a well directed fire from the Hungarian batteries, which rapidly developed itself along the entire line. The Austrians, under cover of their fire, formed their storming columns, and, after they had dislodged the small garrison from the town, they crossed the frozen river and attacked the Hungarians upon the left bank. There, however, they encountered such a determined resistance, that after a protracted and sanguinary conflict they were compelled to fall back on all points. On that day Klapka accustomed his Honvéds to face a heavy fire steadily, and for a length of time; personally leading battalion after battalion, battery after battery into the line, and thereby displaying a presence of mind and bravery which must have inspired his soldiers to a man with undaunted courage. While his battalions relieved each other,

Klapka, mounted upon a white charger, remained in the midst of the Tirailleurs during the entire engagement, a mark for a thousand bullets. On that day the Honvéds bestowed on him the surname of "the Tiralleur General," which he retained throughout the campaign.

At the approach of twilight Klapka went over to the offensive, and drove away the Austrians, both from the right bank of the Theiss and the town; his hussars pursuing the fugitive enemy during the entire night.

Scarcely, however, had this able leader adorned the Hungarian arms with the first laurels of that campaign, than the Government placed him under the old Polish General, Dembinski, who had been appointed to the chief command of all the Hungarian forces along the Theiss.

While Klapka was fettered in his operations, Görgey descended from the mountains in Northern Hungary and unexpectedly appeared in the flank of Schlick, who might thus have easily been annihilated between the two corps. But the favourable opportunity was lost by Dembinski's indecision. Klapka could not prevail on him to make a combined attack upon Schlick; and while Dembinski wavered and wearied the troops by useless marches to and from Miskoltz, Schlick, having been again defeated by Klapka in an *arrière-garde* engage-

ment at Hidasnémeti, slipped away, without sustaining further loss.

Towards the middle of February Dembinski commenced operations with the corps of Klapka and Görgey, to oppose the Austrians in their advance from Pesth; Klapka thereby leading the van. In the vicinity of Erlau the latter surprised two escadrons of cuirassiers so successfully, that the greater part of them were either cut down or taken prisoners. A second and still more important surprise had been planned by that indefatigable leader against one of Schlick's divisions, who, entangled in the difficult defiles of the Mátra Mountains, moved slowly onwards parallel with the Hungarians, intent on effecting a junction with Windischgrätz. Having received reliable intelligence of the difficult situation of the Austrians beyond the Mátra, Klapka presently resolved to attempt an unexpected attack upon them by means of one of the mountain passes. He accordingly dispatched a strong detachment to scour the country, and was himself about to follow with a division, when he received a counter order from Dembinski, which compelled him to renounce his splendid scheme, when already half achieved. For, the detached column had, at dawn, on the 27th of February, stealthily fallen upon the sleeping Austrians in their quarters at Pétervásár, and by its sudden ap-

pearance spread such terror and confusion amongst them, that, instead of attempting to resist, they sought safety in the most disorderly flight. As, however, no aid arrived, the Honvéds turned round in the middle of the village, and fell back unmolested, taking a couple of hundred prisoners with them. The van of the Hungarian army in short marches reached Kápolna, ten miles beyond Erlau, and there deployed along the Tarna river, when Windischgrätz with 40,000 men and 200 guns appeared from Gyöngyös, and immediately opened a heavy cannonade upon the Honvéds. At this moment not one half of the main army of 36,000 men and 160 guns, commanded by Dembinski, was concentrated on the threatened point; as Görgey's divisions were yet several miles behind the battle-field. The right wing of the small force which faced the enemy was commanded by Klapka. It consisted of a division of his own corps, with which he stood in Verpeleth, at a distance of three miles from the centre. The main object of his task was to watch the pass of the Mátra, by which Schlick was most likely to hasten to the support of Windischgrätz, whose attack on that day chiefly consisted in attempts to break through the centre. Towards evening he discontinued operations, so that overnight both parties remained in possession of the hotly-contested field.

At the beginning of the battle Dembinski was at Erlau, and on the receipt of the news thereof immediately set out for the scene of action, and despatched orders for Görgey's advance. It was, however, physically impossible for the latter to come up in time. Thus, on the morning of the 27th of February, the action began afresh under constantly-increasing disadvantages for the Hungarians. At that time the numbers of the Austrians were already swelled by Schlick's corps, who had forced the pass of Sirok, and at break of day descended into the Tarna valley, to throw the weight of his troops into the balance of the wavering contest. At the outlets of the defile he encountered Klapka, who at the head of three thousand men defended his post step by step against the overwhelming hostile forces. After a severe contest of two hours the Austrians succeeded in dislodging him from Verpeléth. But having rallied his battalions, Klapka undertook a vigorous assault to reconquer the village. He pressed with a storming column into the main street and continued to push forward, when his horse was killed under him. At the sight of his fall the Honvéds began to waver and to retreat, which compelled their commander to quit the village, though one of the last to do so.

The Austrians, taking advantage of this momentary disorder, debouched from Verpeléth in

strong cavalry columns and attacked Klapka's position behind the village, who sent three escadrons of hussars to charge them. The horsemen dashed against each other in a furious onset, swaying to and fro in the terrible *mêlée* like a gigantic whirlwind. As the struggle proved too unequal, Klapka ordered the reserve to come up to the support of his cavalry. But the enemy's horse having also been augmented by a fresh division, their shock at length decided the combat. The hussars, though they performed wonders of bravery, began to give way and to seek shelter behind the infantry and the guns, which had now to sustain the whole weight of the assault. This was about midday. At this critical moment a division led by Görgey himself hastened to the aid of the right wing, which not only re-established the balance of the battle, but also cleared the open space before the village of the enemy's horse. Hereupon Görgey took the command of the entire force and despatched Klapka to bring up the second division of his corps, which was on its march from Erlau.

While the right wing had so hard a struggle to maintain the ground, the fate of the day was decided in the centre, where Dembinski directed operations in person. But spite of his personal bravery, with only four battalions at his disposal, he could not resist the reiterated assaults of so

superior an enemy. All his exertions were to no purpose. He was driven from Kápolna, and on leading a battalion of Italians to reconquer the village it was completely destroyed. Nothing remained for him but to beat a retreat along the whole line, which was accomplished in tolerable order, owing to the support of Görgey's divisions which had just then arrived.

When Klapka returned with the remnant of his corps, he found the right wing likewise in full retreat, and thus was only able to protect their flank from being turned by Schlick.

On the following day the army was concentrated at Kövesd, whence Dembinski, after defeating the Austrians in an *arrière-garde* engagement, resolved to recross the Theiss; spite of the entreaties of the sub-commanders, who, aware of the excellent spirit of their troops, would have preferred an attack upon the Austrians to a disgraceful retreat. At the ensuing retrogade movement, whereby the whole army became entangled in the bogs of the Theiss, the most difficult part of the manœuvre, the leading of the rear guard, fell to Klapka's share. Having been ordered to protect the passage over the Erlau river, he took up a disadvantageous position at Egerfarmos, and in face of a powerful enemy executed the hazardous task with astonishing skill and with comparatively trifling losses

amongst his men. When the exhausted horses and oxen could no longer proceed along the road, which, owing to a sudden thaw, was gradually transformed into a sea of mud, the devoted Honvéds attached themselves to the guns and ammunition carts, and dragged them through the formidable defile. While the repeated breaking in of the bridge over the Erlau river greatly retarded their crossing, Klapka stood in defence of the point in the midst of the iron showers poured in upon him from six Austrian batteries drawn up opposite in a half-circle. Though the swampy nature of the ground scarcely permitted the unlimbering of a few guns, his firm and dauntless attitude inspired the enemy with such respect that they dared not approach him even in his desperate position. The passage, as well as the cannonade, lasted till evening, when at length, after indescribable difficulties and hardships, the retreat was successfully effected. The next morning Klapka joined the army, which on the succeeding day crossed the Theiss at Füred.

Dembinski's gross mistakes during his short command, and their detrimental consequences, were so palpable, that the sub-commanders found it necessary to convene a council of war of all the staff officers of the army, who unanimously resolved, that, as Dembinski's inaptness for the chief com-

mand so imminently endangered the existence of the army, and thus likewise that of the country, the command should no longer be left in his hands. They forthwith acquainted the Government of these facts as well as of their resolution, and petitioned the appointment of another commander-in-chief. At this juncture Kossuth hastened to Füred, and having convinced himself as to the justness of the complaint against Dembinski, appointed General Vetter in his stead; and when the latter was unable to remain at his post owing to a sudden attack of illness, General Görgey, towards the end of March 1849, was named his successor.

The troops confided to this leader, whose name has since then been so justly identified with all that is disgraceful to a man and to a patriot, consisted of the First, Second, Third, and Seventh corps, numbering 40,000 men, 8000 horse and 180 guns, and comprising the flower of the Hungarian forces.

A severe winter's campaign had already inured the Honvéds to the hardships of war, and several recent victories made them impatient to add fresh laurels to those already gathered. Thus animated by an hereditary martial spirit, and led on by experienced Generals, they crossed the Theiss at two points, and pressed forward with irresistible power on the path of glory and triumph, chasing the

enemy's main army before them from the Steppes as far as the borders of Austria.

The brilliant achievements performed in this remarkable series of victories were chiefly the work of Klapka and Damjanich, whose heroic forms soar far above even those of their gallant comrades. The former was commander of the First, and the latter of the Third corps. These Generals were united both by the ties of patriotism and of intimate friendship; and thus carried on their splendid operations in perfect harmony and without the interference of Görgey, who, feeling his inferiority, left the execution of the plans entirely in their hands.

Although Damjanich possessed neither the genius of Klapka in planning extensive operations, nor Bem's rapidity in pursuing his successes, still in arranging a battle and in carrying out a bold design, he was equalled by few and surpassed by none. His cool determined prowess never recoiled before an obstacle however great, and in all his numerous encounters with Serbians and Austrians he fought no battle, engaged in no conflict, in which he did not come off victoriously.

His martial appearance alone sufficed to raise the spirits of the Honvéds, and fill them with confidence and enthusiasm. Of a proud and stately figure, with a magnificent head and a countenance

full of vigour and nobility, he inspired at the same time esteem and fear, his mere presence exercising a sort of tacitly acknowledged superiority over those around him. His luxuriant black beard heightened still farther the dignity of his port, and his flashing eyes told of a stern and unflinching will. His character was honest and generous, sometimes rough, but never unjust, and only severe when wanton cruelties, such as those of the Serbians against the unoffending Hungarian and German inhabitants, aroused his patriotic wrath.

Having advanced as far as Gyöngyös without meeting the enemy, who occupied the important line of the Zagyva river, Klapka drew up a bold plan to throw the whole army upon the right wing of the Austrians. The latter seeing themselves outflanked, voluntarily abandoned their position and fell back upon Gödöllö.

The first encounter, after the advance upon Pesth had commenced, took place on the 4th of April, when Klapka, during his march through the bogs of the Tápio river, was suddenly attacked near Tápio-Bicske, and thrown into momentary confusion. At the news of his critical situation, Damjanich hastened with a division to his support.

Notwithstanding that only a small and long defile led to the bridge, the key to the enemy's position, which was protected by numerous sharp-

shooters and guns, Damjanich, at the head of the third and ninth battalions, advanced upon the dike at a firm and steady pace, in the midst of a furious fire of grape and grenades. The enemy, unable long to resist the impetus of the charge, gave way; the bridge was carried, and six guns re-captured.

After a retreat of about sixty miles the Austrians at last resolved to wage a decisive battle previous to giving up the metropolis. For this purpose they concentrated their forces on the heights of Gödöllö and Isaszeg, under the personal command of Windischgrätz. The First and Third corps of the Hungarians, on their march along the road of Isaszeg, fell in at noontide on the 6th of April with the enemy, who, headed by Jelachich, had taken up a formidable position on the steep and commanding hills behind Isaszeg. In spite of the disadvantages of the ground, which was broken by deep ravines, and covered with thick brushwood and forests, which in several places had been set on fire; notwithstanding the superior forces of the Austrians, Klapka and Damjanich, after a short consultation, decided to attack them without delay. The First corps, which formed the vanguard, commenced debouching through the forest at the left of the road, under the cover of the Tiralleurs, who were already engaged in a spirited skirmish with the Croats of Jelachich.

Damjanich deployed to the right, and opened a well-directed fire upon the Ban's left wing. As soon as the Hungarians in their pursuit of the receding Croats had reached the clearing before Isaszeg, a destructive fire was poured in upon them from several of the enemy's batteries, mounted on the brow of a ridge behind that place, which however did not impede Klapka in bringing up his artillery, and in sending his storming columns against the village. There a stern conflict at the point of the bayonet ensued. The Austrians contested their ground with surprising courage; yet the Honvéds, though several times repulsed, carried the principal houses, and, in face of an outnumbering force, kept their position with an intensity of devotion and contempt of death seldom witnessed.

Meanwhile the battle developed itself along the whole line. Damjanich not only supported Klapka in the unequal contest; but at the head of his brave battalions descended the slopes of the valley which separated him from the enemy's position, and with his wonted coolness and intrepidity led them to the charge against a line of thirty guns. The enemy, startled at such boldness, began to waver, when about two o'clock P.M., in the right flank and rear of Damjanich, strong columns were descried rapidly advancing. He was left but a short time

in doubt as to the identity of the new comers; the balls that soon ploughed his ranks showing that the enemy had received a fresh reinforcement. It was the corps of Schlick, who, with his 18,000 men, had hastened from Gödöllö to the scene of action, and thus unexpectedly turned the balance of the battle. Damjanich, all at once assailed from two sides, was unable to bear up under so formidable a cross fire, and fell back slowly and in excellent order, presenting an imposing front to the enemy. At the same time he detached eight escadrons of hussars against the advancing Austrian cavalry, who, without coming to close action, kept them in awe until the infantry had reached the borders of the wood, where that General was determined to hold out to the last. In vain the enemy brought up column after column to storm the wood; in vain they showered upon its valliant defenders grape, grenades, rockets, and missiles of every kind. The attacks rebounded from the heroic breasts of the Honvéds, and never did Damjanich display such perseverance and bravery as on that day when, surrounded by a hundred deaths, he stood invulnerable and unconquered amongst the Tiralleurs like a granite rock encompassed by furious but impotent waves.

At the appearance of Schlick, Jelachich threw his whole force upon Klapka, and drove him back

from the village as well as from the clearings; yet no farther success could he gain against that young but skilful General. Undaunted by an enemy so superior in number, and by the havoc amongst his men, who were mowed down rank after rank, Klapka opposed a glorious resistance to their impetuous exertions, setting the most noble example of heroism to his soldiers.

There is scarcely a doubt that at last the enemy, with their twofold numbers, would have overpowered the Hungarians had not the approach of the Second corps, about six o'clock P.M., under the command of General Aulich, again changed the fate of the day. The joyous tidings of the arrival of the reserve spread like lightning along the line and filled every Honvéd with fresh ardour. The battle at once assumed a new aspect. Whilst Aulich with his batteries and the cavalry took up a position in the centre, opening a ruinous fire upon the enemy, and dispatching his battalions to the succour of the two battered wings, the Hungarians simultaneously bore down the slopes, charging the Austrian line with irresistible power. The latter, unprepared for such a turn in affairs, could not long withstand the assault, but gave up their position, retreating under cover of night to Gödöllö, five miles behind the battle-field. This, the most bloody and most decisive of the battles during that

campaign, had an extremely demoralising influence on the Austrians. They had no courage to wage a second engagement before Pesth, and fell back upon that town in order to secure, in case of need, a safe retreat to the right bank of the Danube. This victory gained Klapka the rank of General.

On the evening of the battle at Isaszeg, Kossuth joined the army at Gödöllö, and there, on the following morning, with the unanimous consent of the Generals, he resolved to propose to the Diet the deposition of the perjured Austrian dynasty from the Hungarian throne.

At Gödöllö a plan was also drawn up for further operations, which, with the aid of three corps, were to be continued on the left bank of the Danube for the relief of the fortress of Comorn, then besieged by the Austrians. Leaving the Second corps and the division of the gallant Colonel Kmetty to demonstrate against Pesth, the main army hastened to accomplish its admirable, though difficult task. At Waitzen they met an Austrian corps of 12,000 men. The two Generals at once resolved to advance upon them. Damjanich was to charge in front, while a brigade of the First corps made a circuit through the mountain to fall upon their rear. The position of the Austrians, who awaited the Hungarians in battle array upon a range of hills before the town, was exceedingly

advantageous, their right wing resting on the Danube and their left on the mountain.

The first onset, led by Colonel Visocki, rebounded from the steady defence and raking fire of the enemy, and even when resumed met with no better result; whereupon the heroic Colonel Charles Földváry, putting himself at the head of the third battalion, commenced a fresh attack, breaking like an iron wedge through the centre of the Austrians. The breach thus made was widened by other battalions, who followed in the track of the third, driving the enemy, with the loss of several field-pieces, at the point of the bayonet before them. At the entrance of the town the latter again stood at bay. There a fierce engagement took place, which lasted for an hour, until at the fall of the Austrian commander his soldiers turned back and fled in the direction of Gran, pursued by the cavalry of Klapka's brigade, which was sent to attack them in the rear.

The continual advance and victories of the till then despised Honvéds, filled the Austrians with apprehensions of a serious nature. They despatched reinforcements from Olmütz as well as from Vienna to the scene of war, under a new commander, General Wolgemuth, renowned for the part he had taken in the Italian campaign. This General appeared on the stage with an army of 26,000 men, to oppose

the progress of the Hungarians, taking up a position on the heights behind Nagy-Sarló, after he had quietly permitted the latter to cross the swollen Gran river.

The two Hungarian corps as usual marched together. Klapka, who led the van, first discovered the enemy, and made a plan of attack, which being approved of by Damjanich, they gave the signal for a combined advance in three columns upon the village, which was apparently the key to the enemy's position.

It was not the custom of the Honvéds during that campaign to spend much of their time in firing; the onset once commenced changed rapidly into a combat with the bayonet. This was the case at Nagy-Sarló. The guns of the enemy before the village were soon dislodged by the batteries of the Third corps; and the battalions marched on to the storm whilst singing national melodies. The result of half an hour's hard struggle was the conquest of the moiety of the village. But the enemy continued to send fresh troops to the aid of their receding comrades, and thus the contest became more and more sanguinary and obstinate; in every house, yard, and street there was a separate and protracted fight, sustained on the part of the Austrians by the raking fire of their batteries from the surrounding hills; nevertheless, the Hunga-

rians in the end succeeded in entirely dislodging the enemy from Nagy-Sarló.

Meanwhile the two Generals collected their troops in the streets to lead them to a decisive onset against the enemy's position on the adjacent heights, from whence their guns continued to plough the valley below with balls and grenades. This movement was protected by the batteries of the Third corps, who had already debouched from the village, and began to return the fire of the Austrians. They not only facilitated the deploying of the troops, but also frustrated the advance of the dragoons, who made a hazardous dash against a battery of the First corps.

At this time, four o'clock, P.M., the *tête* of a cavalry column appeared on the left wing of the Hungarians, advancing at full speed against the line of the enemy. They were the hussars of the Seventh corps, who, on hearing the roar of the cannonade, came up to support the main army; and now, conjointly with Nagy Sándor's hussars, fell upon the enemy's horse drawn up on the plain below the heights. This was the favourable moment for a general assault. The storming drums resounded along the whole line, and the battalions, formed into columns, advanced to close the day's work. Neither the fatigue, the galling fire, nor the steep acclivities prevented the Honvéds from

scaling the heights before them, which in a few minutes were carried, and the enemy put to flight. From the conquered eminence the army enjoyed a magnificent spectacle; in front the flying Austrian infantry, and on the left in the plain a grand attack of fourteen escadrons of hussars upon their whole cavalry. After a fierce *mêlée*, the Austrians turned and fled, leaving their guns and infantry at the mercy of the victors. Night alone put a stop to the pursuit of the fugitives, who in order not to be impeded in their flight, had thrown off their spatterdashes, which were found in heaps along the roads they had taken.

Whilst, however, the main army consulted its safety in flight, all on a sudden a cannonade sprang up in the rear of the Hungarians, and a column of Austrians—the brigade of Herzinger—commenced debouching from the forest of Nagy-Sarló. Klapka presently led two battalions and a battery against them, and after a spirited skirmish, compelled them to follow in the track of their army, for whose support they had arrived too late.

After the battle of Nagy-Sarló no farther impediments existed to the advance of the Hungarians under the walls of Comorn, which was accomplished on the 22nd of April, when the vanguard of the First corps entered the fortress amidst the thunder of the cannons of both friend and foe; the

latter still being in possession of the right bank of the Danube, and not sparing their balls in giving a warm greeting to the new comers.

The concluding scenes in the campaign of April—not less admirable than the foregoing—were performed during the night and morning of the 26th by the storming of the enemy's approaches on the right bank, and in the battle connected with it.

The plan for that magnificent feat of arms—the surprise of the approaches—was drawn up by Klapka and executed by the *élite* battalions of the First, Third, and Eighth corps. The troops destined for that purpose noiselessly crossed the Danube in large boats, on the evening of the 25th, and after midnight, without even loading their muskets, commenced an attack at three points. The battalions of the Third corps were the first to scale the enemy's redoubts, taking the whole garrison—the Grenadiers of Olmütz—prisoners almost without resistance. By dawn of morning all the entrenchments, with their garrisons and guns, were captured after a more or less bloody contest.

The Austrians, numbering about 26,000 men, instead of hastening to the aid of their comrades left their camp in great confusion and retreated to the Acs forest.

Meanwhile the Hungarians crossed the Danube

by means of a bridge of rafts; and drew up in battle array opposite to the enemy. The left wing was commanded by Klapka, the centre by Damjanich, and the right by Görgey. The First and Third corps had again to fight the battle, the Seventh corps—the strongest of the army—in consequence of Görgey's defective dispositions, being absent on some useless mission. A few battalions of the Eighth corps, which formed the garrison of Comorn, stood in reserve; thus the whole force of the Hungarians scarcely amounted to 20,000 men. The signal for the attack having been given, the left wing commenced the engagement with a cannonade, which gradually spread along the whole line. Damjanich with his heroic battalions obtained the first advantage over the opposite centre. The right wing had the most difficult part to play, having to contend with the riflemen in the Acs forest, occupied by outnumbering forces; still the Austrians visibly lost ground; when from Dotis in their right wing the *têtes* of several columns became visible. They were the remainder of the Austrian army, coming up from Pesth just in time to re-establish the balance of the battle. This reinforcement gave them a superiority in their cavalry, which in a deep column made a fearful dash against the advancing hussars of Nagy Sándor, compelling the latter to seek shelter behind the

masses of the infantry. On that occasion one of the rarest instances of a combat of foot against horse occurred. The 47th battalion, commanded by Major Beöthy, having, on the rapid approach of the Austrian cavalry, no time to form *en masse*, after discharging their guns attacked the horsemen, as they swept down upon them, in front with the bayonet, and valiantly drove them back.

Görgey seeing the enemy's superiority and the weariness of his troops, who had been marching and fighting for twenty hours, gave orders to desist, contented with the possession of the battle-field and the camp of the Austrians, who, happy to get away upon such easy terms, immediately marched off towards the frontiers.

For a while the great work of Hungary's deliverance was accomplished. The Austrian main army, which five months previously had so proudly entered the country, now fled towards Vienna, completely routed. Bem had cleared Transylvania of the presence of the Austro-Russian forces and the Serbians were entirely subdued by the victorious arms of Perczel. Both Hungary's good fortune and glory stood at their zenith. Though the former soon sank beneath the clouds of the approaching Cossack hordes, the latter shines in undimmed splendour far above the reach of oppressors.

At the close of the April campaign Government placed the direction of the ministry at war in the hands of Klapka, who, towards the end of April, proceeded to Debreczen. But all the energetic measures of the new minister were frustrated by Görgey's arbitrary interference. Instead of being satisfied with the chief command of the army, he wanted as well to rule in the supreme council of the land. When Klapka saw that he could not act independently, he resigned his trust, and solicited for some other appointment in the army. He was accordingly named both to the command of the fortress of Comorn and of the troops on the right bank of the Danube. There again he was deprived of independent action, since Görgey, now himself minister of war, intrusted the guidance of operations to a central Chancery, from whence Klapka received his dispositions. This naturally occasioned continual delays and a lukewarmness in the operations, which later resulted in the most disastrous events. In vain Klapka protested against Görgey's dilatory proceedings as well as the transfer of the seat of war to the unimportant line of the Wag river. His weighty remonstrances were disregarded, and moreover he was ordered to take command in the island of Schütt, which lies between two arms of the Danube, while Görgey himself commenced a series of incoherent attacks

upon the Austrians stationed in the extensive bogs of the Wag. Klapka as usual displayed uncommon sagacity and heroism in the defence of his post; yet the reiterated defeats of Görgey could not be redressed by the skill and success of a single sub-commander. The army withdrew from the Wag and Schütt after it had lost four valuable weeks and the sixth part of its forces.

About this time—the end of June—the Austrians under Haynau had concentrated their troops near Presburgh, and, together with a corps of Russians, mustered 50,000 men. After the sanguinary engagement at Raab, Haynau advanced upon Comorn, and, having made several forced reconnoitrings, he on the 2nd of July undertook a general assault upon the entrenched camp of the Hungarians, who numbered only 22,000 men. Görgey was totally unprepared for such a contingency, and the leaders had but time to exchange a few hurried words, when the fast falling balls in the camp itself warned them of the magnitude of the danger. Klapka took the command of the left wing, Gorgey himself hastening to the right, where the greatest confusion already prevailed. The Austrians having succeeded in dislodging the Honvéds from some of the detached redoubts there, pushed forwards against the second line of fortifications. Görgey's presence at the threatened

point restored the battle to its proper level. He soon succeeded in driving the enemy from position to position; the lost redoubts were recaptured by the 18th battalion, and the batteries supported by several escadrons of hussars sallied forth in pursuit of the enemy.

While these advantages were attained on the right wing, Klapka carried out his operations with not less promptitude and success. As the enemy had already stormed Ó Szöny, which formed the key to the left wing, Klapka placed himself at the head of seven battalions, and after an obstinate combat, supported by the heavy guns from the fortress, he at length carried the village—where the young Emperor Francis Joseph then was—at the point of the bayonet, and forced the Austrians, in spite of the presence of their Emperor, to a disorderly retreat; hereupon Klapka concentrated a force of twenty-nine escadrons in the centrum, and made an attempt to break through the enemy's line. The Austrian cavalry who opposed the attack was routed, and the mighty column swept down upon the heels of the fugitives as far as Csém, where, however, the Russian reserve brought them to a stand by the fire of fifty guns. In vain the hussars and their batteries displayed the most devoted heroism. The destructive and overpowering fire of the enemy forced them to desist in the pursuit of their suc-

cess, and when menaced both in flank and rear, they were compelled to fall back upon the entrenchments.

While the contest was still raging night set in and separated the adversaries. The Austrians withdrew behind the Acs forest, leaving the Hungarians in possession of the hard contested battle-field.

After this battle Klapka proposed throwing all the disposable troops upon the left bank of the Danube, in order to join the army under Dembinski, and to deal a decisive blow against the Russians ere they could unite their forces with the Austrians. But the commanders of the different corps fully confiding in Görgey's honesty of purpose and wise dispositions, rejected Klapka's fine plan, and moreover consented to a fool-hardy attack upon the Austro-Russian army before the entrenchments.

Though convinced of the impossibility of successfully executing such a scheme; yet Klapka, for the sake of military discipline, would not decline the chief command conferred upon him for that day by Görgey himself, and sallied forth on the hazardous enterprise at the head of 30,000 men.

All the bravery and noble self-sacrifice of the Honveds only served to increase their wanton losses without gaining the object of the fight, namely, the

breaking through the Austrian line, and the removal of the theatre of war to the right bank of the Danube. After a six hours' heroic fight, Klapka fell back upon the camp as steadily and in the same order as if he had been executing a manœuvre on the drilling ground, keeping the enemy at a respectful distance throughout his retreat.

On Görgey's departure to the Theiss with the flower of the army, Klapka was left in Comorn at the head of a garrison of 18,000 men. At length, freed from all fetters as well as enriched by the experience of an entire campaign, Klapka's creative genius unfolded itself in gigantic proportions. Scarcely had he re-organised the troops, when, after several successful enterprises, he decided to lead the Honvéds against the besieging corps, which consisted of 16,000 men. In pursuance of his daring plan Klapka undertook a sally on the third of August. The combat lasted for two hours, and after the entrenchments of the Austrians had been carried at the point of the bayonet the latter gave way, and at last fled in the wildest disorder, partly towards Presburgh and partly to the Schütt across a bridge over the Danube. Had the column which was destined to outflank the enemy arrived earlier at the bridge, the world would have witnessed the extraordinary feat of the besieged taking the besieging corps prisoners. The victory was com-

plete. Thirty guns, several thousand prisoners, and an immense booty fell into the hands of the Hungarians. The results of this victory were almost incalculable. Half Hungary, with her dense and patriotic population, was at the disposal of the conqueror, and the whole of Austria, together with the city of Vienna, stood open to him if he chose to bend his steps in that direction; since no imperial army was left to oppose his victorious advance. Even the success of the Russians on the Theiss could not have averted the blow aimed at the very heart of Austria. After having despatched a strong flying column, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Mednyánszky, for the sake of organising a new army, and of aiding the rising of the population along the Danube and the lake of Balaton, Klapka, rife with great projects for the invasion of Austria, left the fortress with 8000 men and advanced in the direction of Presburgh. The exulting people rose *en masse* in every direction. Thousands of recruits daily poured in, and were formed into fresh battalions and escadrons. The avalanche destined for the destruction of the hereditary foe increased rapidly in its onward course.

In the midst of these warlike preparations an unforeseen and overwhelming storm burst forth in the vicinity of the castle ruins of the Világos. It

was Görgey's treacherous surrender. The disastrous effect of such an event upon the land was easily to be foreseen, and in the expectation of what really hereafter happened, Klapka, though with a bleeding heart, gave up the projected march upon the capital of the Hapsburgs, and conducted his corps back to Comorn, there to await his country's coming doom. It ensued but too rapidly! Yet, in spite of the hopelessness of their position, the unconquered hero and his garrison, proud of their recent victories, were by no means disheartened. With scorn they rejected Haynau's insolent summons to surrender, and compelled even that merciless foe to respect adversaries like themselves. Not until army after army had been disbanded, and fortress after fortress surrendered, when even the members of Government had fled to Turkish soil, and not a hope of relief remained for the isolated garrison; then, six weeks after Görgey's surrender, Klapka complied with the reiterated demands of Haynau to capitulate on twelve honourable conditions, thereby saving all that yet remained in his power to save: the honour of the Hungarian arms and the garrison of Comorn. Great indeed must the Austrians' terror have been when, actually in the possession of the entire land, and backed in case of need by all the armies of Europe, from mere apprehension of Klapka's

military renown they granted a capitulation to a fortress which at farthest must have succumbed to a two months' siege.

Comorn was to be delivered up in the beginning of October. Ere that fatal day arrived, Klapka wished once more to see his brave Honvéds arrayed under the protection of the sacred tricolor; while the banner of death and of iron rule already waved over the rest of the mourning land.

On the 28th of September the garrison was paraded to divine service, which was at the same time to be a *requiem* for the comrades fallen in defence of their hearths. The troops, mustering twenty-two battalions and fourteen escadrons, assembled at eleven o'clock in the morning in the large entrenched camp, once again under arms, with flying colours, and their front once more turned towards the enemy. The day was chill. A grey veil covered the sky, and cast a yet deeper shadow on the melancholy countenances of the warriors. The united bands played Mozart's Requiem. Every tone of the deep, solemn strains rang as sadly and slowly through the still frosty air as if laden with the dying hopes of so many patriotic hearts.

At the conclusion of the service Klapka decorated with medals of honour the breasts of those Honvéds who had distinguished themselves in the last battle. At length this too came to an end; and now the

defiling of the troops alone remained to bring that solemn farewell to a close. The bands struck up the ancient and favourite Rákóczi March, at whose inspiring sounds batteries, escadrons, and battalions, in slow time indeed; and yet in such rapid succession, marched past their beloved Commander, to salute him with a last "*Éljen.*" The scene was too overpowering for the noble and sensitive Klapka. He put spurs to his horse, and rode off to escape the pang of hearing the last *Éljen* of the last Honvéds.

At length the sound of voices and of music ceased; men and horses disappeared, and in the wide arena, but a few moments before so replete with life and bustle, the stillness of death now reigned. Nothing was to be seen save a few sentinels on the distant ramparts, who, as they stood out immoveable against the darkened sky, looked as if they had been the shades of some of the fallen brave, who had risen from their resting-places to witness the last act of that patriotic farewell. All that betokened life there was a solitary vulture, which noiselessly cut through the air in an easterly direction, guided by its mysterious instinct towards the scenes of death and destruction.

While the troops were preparing to give up their trust a violent storm set in on the night of

the 1st of October, which so completely tore and scattered the white flag hoisted on the ramparts, that in the morning nought but the staff was to be seen. The people fully believed that the storm was the last protest of departing freedom against the occupation of the fortress by its hereditary enemy.

Too proud to avail himself of the advantages of an amnesty at the hands of the Austrians, Klapka went into exile there to share the fate of many of his brave compatriots. But even as a houseless fugitive he did not cease to labour for the benefit of his country. As his sword was sheathed he took up the pen, and with great care and research collected the materials for the history of the late struggle, which he presented to the world in two different works: the first in English and German, and the second in German, French, and Swedish. These works may be regarded as the most authentic accounts of the warlike events of that period.

When the present war in the East promised a fair field for the display of his talents both in the council and on the battle-field, Klapka hastened to Constantinople to offer his services to the Sultan against Russia. After protracted negotiations, on the very eve of taking command, the alliance between Austria and Turkey was concluded. At this

turn in affairs Klapka deemed it incompatible with his patriotic duty and honour to accept the proffered post; and he immediately left the capital as well as the land of the Moslems.

THE END.